

Parent/Guardian Booklet

**Dalkey School Project
National School
Glenageary Lodge
Glenageary
Co Dublin**

Telephone: 01-2857199
Fax: 01-2350119
Email: info@dspns.ie
Website: www.dspns.ie



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1.1 Introduction: Welcome to the Dalkey School Project National School. We hope that you and your child will have a happy, productive and rewarding time with us. This booklet is produced for the benefit of new parents and guardians. Its aim is to explain the philosophy and structure of the school to you, and to give you some information on what you may expect from us and what we expect from you and your child. Please read it and keep it for future reference. If there are any aspects of it on which you would like further information, please feel free to talk to the staff or members of the Board of Management.

Our school website is a good resource for finding out about daily activities. The Blog page features the most recent events and archives from previous years: <http://www.dspns.ie/> It's family friendly with lots of pictures to enable you to familiarise yourself with the school environment. We use the **Aladdin Connect App** to communicate with Parents/Guardians and to **accept online payment**.

We have fifteen teachers, including the principal, six special needs assistants, a secretary and a caretaker on staff.

1.2 Mission Statement

Dalkey School Project National School strives to create a happy, friendly, inclusive, educational environment where each child is unique and valued. We are a welcoming school where diverse talents are appreciated and the school community works together respectfully. We cooperate to have a peaceful and safe atmosphere in which to learn and teach. We nurture each person's potential and aspire to excellence.



2.0 History and Principles

2.1 History: The Dalkey School Project National School is a National School recognised by the Minister for Education and Skills, subject to the rules of the Department and receiving the same level of funding as other National Schools.

In 1975 a group of people, most of whom lived in or around Dalkey and who believed in educating children of all creeds and backgrounds together, founded the Dalkey School Project. This organisation worked very hard for a number of years and, in 1978, the Dalkey School Project National School opened its doors in Dun Laoghaire. Six years - and a lot of fund-raising and hard work! later, the school moved into its permanent home at Glenageary Lodge. In May 1984, the Minister for Education unveiled a plaque to celebrate the opening of the first multi-denominational national school in Ireland in over one hundred years.

Since then, further equality based schools have been opened in all areas of the country. All these schools are linked together by an organisation called Educate Together, the object of which is to provide support for existing schools and to encourage the establishment of other equality based schools.

2.2 Principles: The school is founded on four core principles:

- a) It is **multi-denominational & equality based**; children of all creeds and none have equal right of access, and the social, religious and cultural background of each child is equally respected.
- b) It is **co-educational**; the school is open to boys and girls on an equal basis. Furthermore, every effort is made to ensure that girls and boys are actively integrated, and sexual stereotyping is avoided, both in attitudes and teaching materials.
- (c) It is **child centred**; the school aims to be a place where a child's quest for growth, self-development and knowledge is fully acknowledged, facilitated and encouraged.
- (d) It is **democratically run**; it is run by management committees which are democratically elected and the involvement of all parents is sought and encouraged.

These principles are based on those developed by the Dalkey School Project, when it set out to found a multi-denominational school.

3.0 General Information

3.1 Daily Timetable

8:20am	School Gates Open
8:30am	Classes Start
10:20-10:30am	Morning break time
12:15-12:45pm	Break time
1:10pm	Hometime for Junior and Senior Infant children
2:10pm	Hometime for 1 st – 6 th class children

3.2 Morning line up

Junior and Senior Infants: Children and parents/guardians are welcome to gather in the patio from 8:20am. This is **not** playtime. Children should wait quietly under parent/guardian supervision. Teachers will bring children into class at 8:30am. Parents/Guardians should aim to leave the room by 8:45am latest.

1st – 6th classes: Children who arrive at school before 8:30am line up in the big yard until teachers come to bring them in. This is not playtime, and children are not supervised by staff until 8:30am.

Late Attendance: If children are late, they should enter by office (Reception) entrance.

For safety reasons, anyone calling into school to pick up children early or drop off lunches etc. should report to Reception.

3.3 School Uniform: There is no uniform for pupils of the D.S.P.N.S. However, it is expected that all children will come to school in neat, tidy and appropriate dress, see Code of Behaviour for further details: <http://www.dspns.ie/policies/> All belongings should be marked with the pupil's name. This is particularly important for coats or any other item which a child will not wear all day.

3.4 Lunch : If all parent/guardians provide healthy lunches, children will not expect treats. Please provide your child with a suitable lunch for school, e.g. sandwiches, fruit, etc. Please **do not** send drinks in glass containers. Choose a lunchbox and drink that **your child** can open easily and does not require assistance. Choose lunches that will allow your child to eat independent of the teacher e.g. peel an orange before placing in lunch box, open packed food he/she cannot manage. Co-operation in promoting our healthy lunch policy will make lunch times happier for all children. Check this link for our Healthy Eating policy: <http://www.dspns.ie/policies/>

3.5 Safe Traffic Plan: Safety at school gates is an issue for most schools. Encourage children to walk or cycle to school where possible. Keep children safe. Respect residents who may be heading out to work or school and allow them easy access to and from their homes. We ask that you are respectful when making parking choices.

We encourage you to use drop off and collection as opportunities to walk a short distance and spend outdoor time with your children. It's an opportunity to get some fresh air and to teach children about road safety and how to dress appropriately for Irish weather. 'There's no such thing as bad weather, only bad gear.'

To ensure the welfare of all in the school community, we ask that the following 'Do's' and 'Don'ts' are observed.

Please do

- park and walk
- watch for children, and allow pedestrians to cross in front of your vehicle
- observe common courtesy; drop off and collection times can be stressful
- be patient with each other (pedestrians, cyclists and car drivers)



Please don't

- drive or park your car past the Glenageary Lodge junction or house no. 52, four doors down from the school
- park in a position that might obstruct any of our neighbours from entering or exiting their drives.
- park in a position that might prevent emergency vehicles from accessing the school or any of the residences in Glenageary Lodge, Arnold Grove or Hillcourt Road.

School traffic is discouraged from entering the last section of the Cul de Sac directly outside the school gates back to the next junction at Glenageary Lodge. *What are our options?*

1. Drop off older children on Arnold Grove, Hillcourt Road, Bellevue Road, Sallyglen Road. If approaching school from Arnold Grove, turn right onto Hillcourt or Bellevue Road. The Hillcourt Road option provides a convenient one-way system for drivers. If approaching school from Hillcourt or Bellevue Road, turn left onto Arnold Grove.

2. Park and walk with younger children. Hillcourt Road, Glenageary Park near Centra shop, Sallynoggin area near Our Lady of Victories Catholic Church, Arnold Grove, Glenageary Lodge, are all within easy walking distance of the school.

3. Consider cycling or walking. There are cycle lanes along the Sallyglen Road and Avondale Road, two major approach routes to the school.

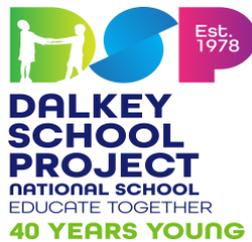
Success of the plan will require cooperation from all members of the school community. Allow extra time to park and walk with younger children. Ensure everyone is dressed appropriately for Irish weather. N.B. Inform child minders & grandparents about the **Safe Traffic Plan**.

4.0 Organisational Structure

4.1 The Patron – The Dalkey School Project: In national schools the Patron is responsible for formulating general policy in relation to the school and for providing any necessary funding over and above that forthcoming from the Department of Education and Skills for premises and equipment.

The Patron is also responsible for nominating representatives to the school's Board of Management. In most national schools, the Patron is the local bishop; an increasing number of schools have Educate Together as their Patron. In DSPNS, the Patron is the Dalkey School Project, a company limited by guarantee. This organisation consists of people who are interested in furthering its aims of multi-denominational schooling for children in Ireland. Membership is open to all on payment of annual subscription. The annual general meeting of this organisation elects an executive committee. The executive committee is responsible for the appointment of four members of the Board of Management, for any capital expenditure incurred by the school and for exercising a watching brief on behalf of the Dalkey School Project to ensure that the principles on which the school was founded are being adhered to.

4.2 Board of Management: The DSPNS Board of Management (BoM) is constituted under rules established by the Department of Education and Skills and consists of the Principal, two members appointed by the Patron, two members elected by the parents, one teacher elected by the teachers and two members co-opted by the core Board and representing the wider community.



The Board is responsible for much of the day-to-day management of the school in consultation with the Principal. It is also responsible for the appointment of teachers and other staff and for the finances of the school.

Patron's Nominees	Ross McManus – Chairperson Simon Boucher – Communications & Voluntary Contributions
Elected Parents	Paula Fagan - Treasurer Michéal Walsh – Maintenance /Premises
Representatives of the wider Community	Michael Lamb – Buildings Project Jennifer Adams – Legal
Principal	Miriam Hurley (Secretary/ET Liaison)
Teacher Nominee	Deborah Reynolds (Health & Safety)

5. The Curriculum

5.1 Aims and Objectives: The general aims and content of the curriculum are laid down by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) under the Department of Education and Skills.

http://www.ncca.ie/en/Curriculum_and_Assessment/Early_Childhood_and_Primary_Education/Pri mary-Education/

Within these boundaries the principal and staff of each school set out their own aims, and plan in detail the curriculum which is suited to the ethos of the individual school and the environment in which it is set.

In the DSPNS the principal and staff aim to create a warm and stimulating environment so that the children may work towards realising their highest potential. In co-operation with the parents, they work to instill feelings of self-confidence, self-awareness and self-respect so that the children are equipped to deal with the world both in and out of school. Within the boundaries of the academic curriculum the objectives are two-fold, namely the achievement of academic excellence for each child according to his/her individual potential and the promotion of cultural enrichment.

5.2 Subjects: Areas which your child will study during her/his eight years in primary school will include Language (English and Gaeilge); Mathematics; Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESS, includes History, Geography and Science); the Arts (Visual Arts, Music and Drama); Physical Education; and Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE).

5.3 Ethical Education: The religious education programme followed by children in the school is known as the *Learn Together* Ethical Education Programme. This consists of four strands: Moral and Spiritual development, Equality and Justice, Belief systems, Ethics and the Environment.

The school also facilitates the organisation of classes of denominational instruction by parents who are members of particular denominations. Details of this will be sent to you early in the school year.

We encourage all parents/guardians to be actively involved in promoting our inclusive, equality-based ethos.

Ethos is defined as the characteristic spirit of a community as demonstrated by its beliefs and aspirations. These are reflected in two elements in our school:

- The taught ethos – an ethical programme, the ‘Learn Together Curriculum’, delivered by teachers in class.
- The lived ethos – the atmosphere, relationships, culture and attitudes. How we relate to each other and the values and attitudes experienced by our children.

Our blog page features most recent updates and shows examples of the lived experience of ethos: <http://www.dspns.ie/blog/>

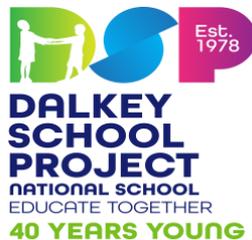
5.4 Team Teaching: While individual classes are assigned to a class teacher – or in the case of a job share situation, two teachers – we work in teaching teams, made up of class teacher(s), resource teacher(s) and, in some groups, special needs assistant. In Junior and Senior Infants we have an Early Intervention team which enables us to split the classes on a daily basis for literacy and numeracy lessons. This flexibility helps in the implementation of our children-centered, activity and experience based curriculum and enables children to learn in smaller groups. Collaboration and co-operation between children is encouraged, and creative thinking is fostered in solving problems, both social and academic. Competition between children is not promoted. However, each child is urged to better his/her own achievements and so reach his/her potential.

5.5 Books and Materials: No one set of texts is used exclusively. Instead the school purchases a wide variety of books. Your child’s reading material, for example, in one year may include several books, work cards and photocopied material. Thus, in your book bills you **will be asked to contribute towards reading materials, audio visual materials, ICT, etc.** This enables us to purchase a range of books, materials and ICT resources from which the older children conduct research into various projects and the younger children can experience a broad spectrum of reading materials.

6.0 School Life

6.1 Behaviour: We encourage positive behaviour as a means to maintaining an inclusive teaching and learning environment. Staff, in consultation with school community, drafted a number of policies as guidelines to help us share a common understanding of expectations at DSPNS. Please take time to read our Positive Behaviour Plan, our Code of Behaviour and the Acceptable Use of Technology Policy: <http://www.dspns.ie/policies/> and to discuss their contents with your child in whatever way is most appropriate. Parents/Guardians of newly enrolled children are asked to sign the agreement forms attached to each of these policies. An active engagement with school policies ensures everyone understands the need for high standards of behaviour, thus making school life pleasant for all.

6.2 Parental Involvement: There is a strong tradition of active parental involvement in the D.S.P.N.S. The more parents offer their time and talents to the school, the better and broader the education we can offer to your children. Consider joining the Parent Teacher Association which organises lots of child-centred, social and fundraising activities during the school year. This has benefits for you as it is a very good way to get to know other parents/guardians. Many parents/guardians assist with a variety of projects such as cooking, art and crafts, school trips, book fair, reading, gardening, forest school and beach school. We strongly urge you to apply for Garda Vetting as part of best practice in terms of child safeguarding procedures.



6.3 Communication with the School: We welcome good communication between parents and teachers. If you have concerns about your child's well-being or progress, feel free to contact the teacher to discuss the matter. Remember the earlier this is done, the better, as problems, no matter how small, are more easily sorted out at an early stage. You are welcome to have a quick word with the class teacher at morning line up time. However, should you need more time, please make an appointment to speak with the teacher at a mutually convenient time. Parent/Teacher meetings are held once a year in November. Reports are issued once a year for all children in June.

A note to the class teacher is required if you wish to take your child out of the school during the school day or if you wish your child to go home early. A note is also required on her/his return if your child has been absent from school following illness or family events. 2nd – 6th classes have school journals and there is space at the back for absence notes, late notes etc.

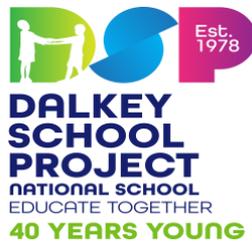
For safety reasons, it is very important that you let the school know if your child is being collected from school by someone other than yourself or the regular person who does this. Anyone calling into school to pick up children early or drop off lunches etc. should report to Reception.

6.4 Communication from the School: Parents/Guardians are notified of school events through the **Aladdin Connect App** and regular updates on the school blog: <http://www.dspns.ie/blog/> **Please check your Aladdin notifications and emails regularly for these.** If you are not receiving communications from the school, let the office know immediately. It is the Parents/Guardians responsibility to actively keep informed of school communications. As part of Green Schools initiatives, we only provide paper copies when requested by parents/guardians. If you would like a paper copy of the newsletter, please contact the school office: 01-2857199 or info@dspns.ie

Junior/Senior Infants and 1st class teachers may include notes in the children's reading folders. 2nd – 6th classes use homework journals and these can be used for parent-teacher communication. Please check folders and homework journals regularly to keep yourself informed of events in your child's class. Class teachers may send short reminders through the **Aladdin Connect App**.

6.5 Health: While regular attendance at school is vital for your child's continuing educational development, we would ask that you do not send her/him to school if he/she is ill. During the course of your child's career in the school, booster vaccinations are organised by the local Health Board through the school. You will be notified about this at the appropriate time and asked for your consent.

Head lice and nits are frequently a problem in school. Please check your child's head regularly for nits and take appropriate action if you find them. Since nits travel easily from one child's head to another, we would appreciate if you could let us know if your child has them, so that we can alert other parents. A little vigilance on everyone's part would help to keep this problem to a minimum.



Should your child develop any of the common childhood illnesses, especially rubella (German measles) please let us know, so that we can inform other parents.

Small accidents are an inevitable part of school life. If a child falls in the school playground, minor cuts and abrasions are treated by the staff in the normal way. If your child should **not** be treated with any particular antiseptic or dressing, **please ensure that we are made aware of this.**

6.6 Medical Emergency: Does your child have a medical condition or has he/she allergies? It is parents/guardians' responsibility to inform the school of the condition, indications of problems, action to be taken and contact numbers, including an emergency contact.

6.7 Emergency Contact: There are occasions in the life of any child at school when it is necessary to contact parents or guardians at short notice - if, for instance, your child becomes unwell during the school day. However, parents are not always immediately available to take such a call. We strongly urge you, therefore, to provide the name and telephone number of another adult - perhaps a grandparent, a neighbour or the parent of a friend in the school - whom we can contact in the event of your not being available.

6.8 Extra-Curricular Activities: A wide range of extra-curricular activities (ECAs) are organised by the Parent Teacher Association (P.T.A.) for the benefit of children. These take place in the hour or so at the end of the school day and currently include swimming, soccer, basketball, chess, guitar, drama, art, karate and hockey. These are available for children from first class up. They are arranged and run by generous parents. ECAs classes begin in mid September and finish mid-June.

The number and range of activities is highly dependent upon the willingness of parents to become involved. Please let us know if you have any skills that you are willing to share with the children of the school.

6.9 Funding

DSPNS is funded from three sources:

- a) The Department of Education and Skills pays the teachers' and SNAs' salaries directly and pays a capitation grant towards the day-to-day running costs of the school.
- b) The balance of money required for the running of the school **must be provided locally**. No fees are charged in national schools so the Board relies on a voluntary contribution system. The voluntary contributions help to pay the school's running costs. These costs include light & heat, insurance, cleaning, class materials, maintenance of premises and equipment and IT resources. Without the **voluntary contributions** the school simply could not run as it does. Details of this year's scheme will be given to you.
- c) The Dalkey School Project Trust was set up by the Patron to hold the local capital needed for the school. This included the full cost of the site and a proportion of building and equipment costs. The Trust still needs to hold funds to ensure that money is available for capital expenditure, e.g. major repair work, replacing equipment, etc. This money is raised through one or two fund-raising activities which take place during the year.



7.0 Conclusion:

We hope that this booklet has given you some idea of what you and your child can expect from your association with the D.S.P.N.S. - and what we would like to expect from you. Any school is a community and that community is best served by all its members becoming fully and actively involved and by good communication all round. If there is any further information you would like, please let us know. Remember, our mission is to strive to create a happy, friendly, inclusive, educational environment where each child is unique and valued. We are a welcoming school where diverse talents are appreciated and the school community works together respectfully. We cooperate to have a peaceful and safe atmosphere in which to learn and teach. We nurture each person's potential and aspire to excellence.