



Parent/Guardian Booklet

2023 - 2024

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1.1 Introduction: Welcome to the Dalkey School Project National School (DSP). We hope that you and your child will flourish and have a happy time with us. This booklet is produced for the benefit of new parents/guardians. Its aim is to explain the philosophy and structure of the school, and to give you some information on what you may expect from us and what we expect from you and your child. Please read and if you have questions, please feel free to phone or email the office: 01-285 7199; info@dspns.ie.

1.2 Our school website is a good resource for finding out about daily activities. The News 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 fourteen teachers, including the principal, seven additional 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: DSP is a National School recognised by the Minister for Education (DE), subject to the rules of the DE 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 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

During Covid 19 restrictions we introduced staggered start & finish times. Consultation with the school community in June 2022 showed a preference for continuing staggered arrivals and departures.

8:25am	Senior Infants, 2 nd , 4 th & 6 th
8:30am	Junior Infants, 1 st , 3 rd , & 5 th

10:00 - 10:20am	Morning break 1
10:25 - 10:45am	Morning break 2

12:15 - 12:35pm	Lunch break 1
12:40 - 1:00pm	Lunch break 2

1:05pm	Hometime for Senior Infants
1:10pm	Hometime for Junior Infants

2:05pm	Hometime for 2 nd , 4 th & 6 th
2:10pm	Hometime for 1 st , 3 rd & 5 th



3.2 Morning arrival: Junior Infants wait at pedestrian Gate 1, at 8.30am. Children wave goodbye to Parents/Guardians and teachers will bring to class

Late Attendance: Phone the school office 01-285 7199 to let us know.

For safety reasons, anyone calling into school to pick up children early or drop off lunches etc. should phone the school office 01-285 7199 to let us know.

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. Refer to the 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/they 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 times to walk a short distance, spend quality 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 number 52 beside 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 the Irish national school system, each school has a patron. The patron typically sets up the school and defines the characteristic ethos and guiding policies of the school such as enrolment and religious education policy. It also provides any necessary funding over and above that forthcoming from the Department of Education and Skills for premises and equipment.

Both Dalkey School Project and Monkstown Educate Together national schools are currently under the patronage of the DSP Patron. The DSP patron maintains an ongoing relationship with each school, supporting their ethos and principles and pillars. Each year the members elect an executive committee. The committee performs the regular duties of the patron. Any adult who subscribes, may join this body. It is not necessary to be a parent or guardian to become a member. The individual schools are managed by Boards of Management on behalf of the patron.

The Patron is 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, equality-based 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 (DE) 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	Ciaran Byrne – Chairperson Brendan Lawlor - Treasurer
Elected Parents	Lisa Halpenny – Communications/PTA Liaison Michael Cush - Legal
Representatives of the wider Community	Michael Lamb – Buildings Project Barbara Whelan – Voluntary Contributions
Principal	Miriam Hurley (Secretary/ET Liaison)
Teacher Nominee	Maryrose Leeson – Premises/Maintenance

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 (DE). http://www.ncca.ie/en/Curriculum_and_Assessment/Early_Childhood_and_Primary_Education/Primary-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.

At DSP the principal and staff aim to create a warm and stimulating environment so that the children may work towards realising their potential. In co-operation with the parents/guardians, 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/their individual potential and the promotion of cultural enrichment.

5.2 Subjects: Areas which your child will study during her/his/their eight years in primary school will include Language (English and Gaeilge); Mathematics; Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE), 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 News page features most recent updates and shows examples of the lived experience of ethos: <https://www.dspns.ie>

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), Additional Needs Teachers (ANT) and, in some groups, Additional Needs Assistants (ANA). In Junior and Senior Infants we have a third infant teacher role that 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/their own achievements and so reach his/her/their potential.

5.5 Books and Classroom 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, you **will be asked to contribute towards classroom materials, audio visual materials, ICT, etc.** This enables us to purchase a range of programmes, materials and ICT resources from which the older children conduct research into various projects and the younger children can experience a broad spectrum of learning materials.

5.6 Changemaker Schools Network: DSP is proud to be a member of the DCU Changemaker School Network. The DCU Changemaker Schools Network supports the 19 Changemaker Schools in developing the identity of a Changemaker with their students. The network also supports each school as it develops the skills and processes of **empathy, creativity, leadership and teamwork**.

<https://www.dcuangemakernetwork.com/dalkey-school-project-ns>

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 the school community, draft policies on an ongoing basis. These policies help us share a common understanding of expectations at DSP. Please take time to read our Positive Behaviour Plan, Code of Behaviour, Acceptable Use of Technology Policy and Anti Bullying 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 Permission 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.

Permission forms are available to parents through the **Aladdin Connect App**.



6.2 Parental Involvement: There is a strong tradition of active parental involvement at DSP. 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. Forms are available through the school office by emailing the office: info@dspns.ie

6.3 Communication with the School: We welcome good communication between parents and teachers. Scheduled Parent/Teacher meetings are held once a year in November. Reports are issued once a year for all children in June. If you have concerns about your child's well-being or progress in between time, 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 can arrange to speak to a teacher by completing a [meeting request form](#) or [phonecall request form](#), both of which can be found on the contact page of the school website. Once your form has been received you will be contacted to arrange a mutually convenient time to speak or meet. You can also email the office and a meeting or phonecall request form can be sent to you. Before contacting the school, please remember to read the [email and meeting guidelines](#) which are also available on the school website under Policies.

Phone or email info@dspns.ie 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 on Aladdin Attendance is also required on her/his/their return if your child has been absent from school following illness or family events.

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 phone the school office 01-285 7199.

6.4 Compassionate Communication: Each person in the DSP community can diminish or enhance others' experience of DSP through their words and actions. We are committed to compassionate communication which helps us deal with conflict or disappointing situations in a no blame, let's find a way situation. It's important to recognise where our feelings (frustration, anger, sadness) are coming from, perhaps it's anxiety that things are not perfect or fear of change. It's also equally important to think about the feelings of others, staff and parents alike. Everyone in the DSP Community is trying their best at any given time. Every teacher and ANA will do their best for an individual child's needs while accommodating the needs of 27/28 other children and their families. As a community, we encourage every parent to look out for, not only their own children, but also other children. It's the DSP way!

6.5 Communication from the School: Parents/Guardians are notified of school events through the **Aladdin Connect App** and regular updates on the school news: <http://www.dspns.ie/> ***Please check your Aladdin notifications and emails regularly for updates.*** 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 of documents when requested by parents/guardians. If you would like a paper copy of policies, 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. Please check folders and **Aladdin Connect App** regularly to keep yourself informed of events in your child's class.



6.6 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/them to school if he/she/they are ill. During the course of your child's career in the school, hearing & vision tests and booster vaccinations are organised by the local Health Board through the school. You will be notified about this 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.**

6.7 Medical Emergency: Does your child have a medical condition or has he/she/they 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.

6.8 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.

6.9 Extra-Curricular Activities (ECAs): The ECA coordinator from the PTA will contact parents/guardians re ECA options.

6.10 Funding

DSP is funded from three sources:

- a) The Department of Education (DE) 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.



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 DSP - and what is expected from you as new families. 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.