

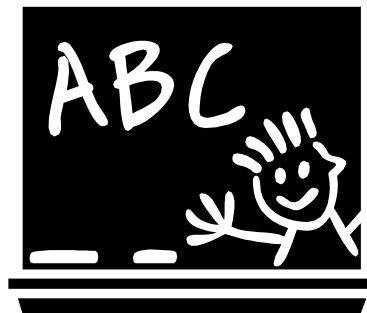
ROBERTSTOWN



Mens sano
sana in corpore

ROBERTSTOWN NATIONAL SCHOOL

Booklet for Parents of Infants Starting School



Mission Statement

Robertstown N.S. is a co-educational, Catholic, primary school, which strives to provide a well-ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and addressed.

While Robertstown N.S. is a school with a Catholic ethos, it also has due recognition for all other religions.

Robertstown N.S. will strive to promote, both individually and collectively, the professional and personal development of teachers through staff development programmes.

Robertstown N.S. will encourage the involvement of parents through home/school contacts and through their involvement in the Robertstown N.S. Parents Association (R.N.S.P.A.)

Robertstown N.S. will endeavour to enhance the self-esteem of everyone in the school community, **to imbue in the pupils respect for people and property and to encourage in them the idea of being responsible.**

Robertstown N.S. will promote gender equity amongst the teachers and pupils.

Déanfaimid iarracht Gaeilge a labhairt.

The school motto is:

Mens Sana In Corpore Sano.
A healthy mind in a healthy body.

Foreword

Fáilte romhat agus roimh do pháiste.



Starting school will be the first big change in the life of your child. Up to this your child 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.

It is important too, particularly during the first year that parents understand what the aims of the school are, as many may be expecting too much in the way of academic achievement.

We know from experience that parents are very anxious to help in any way possible. We have, therefore, included some ideas for the home, which should stimulate the child's interest and nurture his/her desire to know more.

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.

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 the world around them. And they learn fast - but only when they are ready about themselves, about others and them. 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 other, 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.
- Getting each child to **accept the general order**, which is necessary for the class to work well.

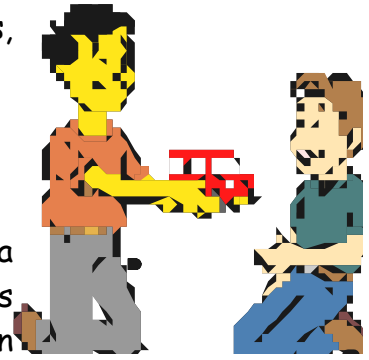
Before Your Child Starts...

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

It would help greatly if your child is able to-

- **Button and unbutton his/her coat** and hang it up.
- **Velcro shoes/tie laces**, hard soled slippers, shoe bag (available through school)
- **Use the toilet without help** and manage pants 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 hanky when necessary.
- **Share** toys and playthings with others and "take turns".
- **Tidy up** and put away his/her playthings.
- Remain contentedly for a few hours in the home of a relation, friend or neighbour. If your child had this experience, then separation from his/her parents when he/she starts school will not cause your child any great anxiety.



Preparing for the 'Big Day'

The child's first day at school is a day to remember for the rest of your child's life. **You can help to make it a really happy one for your child.**

- **Tell your child 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 murder you" though said light-heartedly can make some children very apprehensive.
- Your child will like to have **his/her new uniform and his/her new bag** when he/she begins. These help your child identify more readily with the school and other children.
- The outside of all books/copies/lunch boxes etc must be clearly marked with your child's name and readers must be covered.



The Big Day

Coming in...

When you arrive at the classroom, **be as casual as you can**. Your child will meet the teacher and the other children and will be shown his/her chair.

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

Packed Lunches

Lunch is an important meal for school going children. It should provide one third of their recommended daily allowance of nutrients without being high in fat, sugar or salt. It should also provide dietary fibre (roughage).

The **traditional packed lunch of milk and sandwiches is under attack from a range of convenience foods** like crisps, sweets, biscuits, chocolate and soft drinks. Parents and teachers are concerned about this trend but some find it difficult to come up with popular healthy alternatives.

We will **ask you to provide a healthy lunch right from the start**, particularly on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Also, please, only give your child something you feel he/she can easily manage to eat. Children are not normally very hungry at school, so a little snack will do.

The following guide is designed to help you provide quick, appetising, and nutritious lunches for your children. Friday is treat day but not unhealthy lunch day. One treat is sufficient. Please note: all food containing nuts are **not** permitted in the school, i.e. nutella, some cereal bars.

Bread & Alternatives

Bread or rolls, preferably wholemeal.

Rice - wholegrain.

Pasta - wholegrain.

Potato Salad.

Wholemeal Scones.

Savouries

Lean Meat.

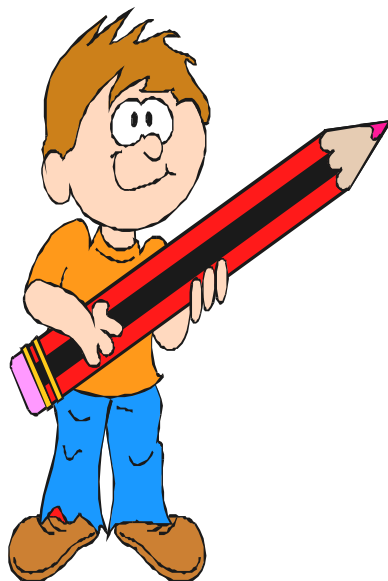
Chicken/Turkey.

Tinned Fish e.g. tuna/sardines.

Cheese, including Edam, blarney, cottage.

Quiche.

Pizza.



Fruit & Vegetables

Apples, Banana, Peach, Plum, Pineapple cubes, Mandarins, Orange segments, Grapes, Fruit Salad, Dried fruit, Tomato, Cucumber, Sweetcorn, Coleslaw, Celery.

Drinks

Water, milk including low fat.

Fruit juices, keep to minimum, because sugar content promotes tooth decay.

High juice Squashes, i.e. low sugar content.

Homemade soup (use Bovril occasionally as it is salty).

Yoghurt.

No fizzy drink or fruit juice on desk during the day, water is preferable. No drinks with artificial colouring eg. Blackcurrant, lucozade.

Start with the Basics

A healthy packed lunch should contain bread or an alternative, a savoury filling which provides protein, a suitable drink and some fruit and/or vegetables.

A Word about Water

Water boosts energy levels and children are dehydrated and don't realise it while playing they are losing liquid from their body.

A Word about Milk

Growing children should get approximately one pint of milk a day, or its equivalent as cheese, yoghurt or milk pudding. This ensures that they get enough calcium, which is essential for healthy bones and teeth. If a child does not drink a glass of milk at lunch, encourage him or her to have a carton of yoghurt or a small helping of cheese instead.

Going Home

- Be sure to **collect your child on time**. Children can become very upset if they feel they are forgotten.
- Keep out of view until the children are released.
- If at any time the collecting routine has to be changed ensure you tell the child and the teacher.
- If parent is delayed make an alternative arrangement for your child and inform them of the person you have nominated to collect them.
- Children will be brought to the gate where they will be met by parent.

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.

A Word of Advice

- **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 signs of your own distress.** Sometimes the parents are more upset than the child and are the main cause of their anxiety.
- When you have reassured your child, leave as fast as possible. The teacher can distract and humour him/her more easily when you are not around.
- Check back discreetly in a short while. You will invariably find that calm has been restored.
- **You must be firm from the start.** Even if a child is upset you must insist that he/she stay for a short time-even ten minutes. Your child must never feel that he/she is winning the psychological battle of wills.

As Time Goes on...

- School begins at 8:55a.m. Mid-morning break: 10.30a.m. to 10.45a.m. To ease the child into the school routine we have a policy where Junior Infants come in at 10am and go home at 12pm for the first two weeks. After that they go home at 1:35p.m. Please make sure that your child is collected at 1:35p.m. as the teacher needs that hour between 1:35p.m and 2:35p.m. to clean up after the day. **Get your child into the habit of being in good time for school from the beginning.**
- 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 your child 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-but don't pester him/her with questions.
- Mind that you take some of his/her "stories" with a pinch of salt.
- If your child's progress is slow, do not compare him/her adversely with other children while he/she is listening. **Loss of self-esteem can be very damaging to your child.**
- Be careful too about criticising his/her teacher in his/her presence. Remember that she is his/her mother figure while he/she is at school and for his/her own well being it is important that he/she has a good positive image of her.
- This last caution applies to his/her image of the school as well. **His/her school is always "the greatest"-whatever its faults.**

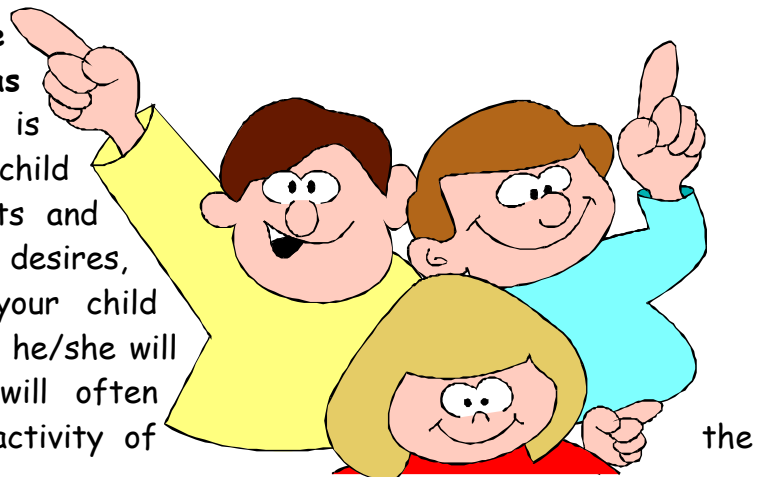
- After the initial 6 weeks of school, children should be encouraged to come into the school on their own, this is to further build on their independence.
- Your child is not going to be a model of perfection all the time-thankfully. You should try to have patience with his/her shortcomings and praise for his/her achievements.
- Children often "forget" or "relay" messages incorrectly, so **please, check your child's bag each night for notes.**
- You have received a book list outlining the books and other bits and pieces your child will need for the year. We would appreciate if the money for Art and Craft's, English Curriculum and the money for photocopying were paid before end of September. As the year goes on, there may be other demands on the purse strings, but they are optional.
- These include:
 - ◆ School Photographs
 - ◆ Tours/Outings
 - ◆ Playball
 - ◆ Bookfair

Further details will be given during the year.

Some Important Areas of Early Learning

Developing his Command of Spoken Language.

It is important that the child's ability to talk is as advanced as possible. It is through speech that your child communicates his/her thoughts and feelings, his/her needs and desires, curiosity and wonder. If your child cannot express these in words he/she will tend to remain silent and will often withdraw from the learning activity of class.



This can be the first sign of failure 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.

You Can Help...

- Talk to your child naturally and casually about things of interest that you or your child 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.
- Your child will have his/her 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 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.



Jolly Phonics

What is Jolly Phonics?

- ✓ A multi-sensory approach to learning sounds and letters
- ✓ It's a five step process
 1. Learning letter sounds
 2. Learning letter formation
 3. Identifying sounds in words
 4. Blending
 5. Tricky words

Why use Jolly Phonics?

- ✓ It is proven to be the most successful phonics programme to date
- ✓ Gives children reading skills from very young age
- ✓ Children actually reading words

Jolly Phonics plan for Term 1

- ✓ Introducing 3 letter sounds per week
- ✓ Thursday and Friday are used for revision and blending activities

- ✓ By Christmas all initial sounds and some blends will be introduced
- ✓ Children are writing letters but in an informal way

How Jolly Phonics works?

- ✓ Incorporates a number of methodologies:
 1. Story
 2. Action & Song
 3. Letter formation - chalk boards / sand / pencil
 4. Worksheet
 5. Sound copies - homework and reinforcement

You can Help..

- Have attractive colourful books in the home.
- Read your child 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.
- Look at the pictures with your child and talk to him/her about what they say.
- Read your child nursery rhymes. He/she will learn them off his/her own bat. Don't try to push him/her.
- Above all, don't push your child with his/her early reading. You may turn him/her against it for evermore.
- Remember that the teacher is the best judge of what rate of progress is best suited to each child.
- 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 Warning

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 your child uses in understanding and talking about certain things in his/her daily experience e.g.

- Your child associates certain numbers with particular 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.



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.

They are free of any hang-ups about Irish unless they become aware that the home attitude towards it is not good. So please be careful that anything you say does not give a negative attitude to your child.

We would want his parents to give every encouragement and help to the small ones 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. Your child must learn to hold the pencil properly and make regular shapes. His/her hand and finger muscles are only gradually developing at this stage. Pencil type is Hand Hugger Triangular HB and please purchase a small rubber pencil grip that contains 3 areas for each finger to be positioned on.

You Can Help

- Your child 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) Plasticine (Marla) to make his own shapes
 - (c) A colouring book and thick crayons
 - (d) Sheets of paper that he can cut up with a safe scissors
- When your child begins to use a pencil make sure that he holds it correctly at the start. It will be difficult to change him/her later.
- If your child is making block letters at home even before he/she comes to school. He/she will start making lower case letters at school, you should try to get him/her to discontinue the blocks and practise his/her new system whenever your child feels like it. Consult the teacher about this.
- Don't discourage left-handedness. If that is your child's definite natural inclination, don't attempt to change him/her.

Other Areas of the Curriculum

The child in juniors learns a lot through many other activities, which do not need any elaboration here. Your child's general development is enhanced through Art & Craft, P.E., Music, Nature and of course through Religious Education.

In regard to the last area its moral and social aspects 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.

The children learn their prayers and bible stories gradually. 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. He/she can then make his/her own contribution to the usual family prayers.

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.** You will find a list of school rules and policies enclosed in the School Booklet for Parents.

Positive Play Programme

This programme takes place during break time's, to encourage positive play behaviour. Behaviour is reinforced by a red, yellow and green card system, which identifies specific behaviours in the yard. The child with the most green cards each month receives the "Caring Classmate Award". To date this programme has been a huge success. Playtime behaviour is much more positive and the children have made new friends and learned a number of new games.

Parting Thoughts

Who is the Boss?

Bit by bit the child will get used to the general discipline of the classroom. He/she will get to understand very quickly that in certain important matters an instruction from the teacher must be obeyed promptly and without question.

Teacher and Parent

At the early stages some parents meet the teacher almost daily and this is a very desirable thing. However, if there is something in particular that you would like to discuss you can arrange to meet her at a time when you both can have a little peace and quiet.

Formal Parent/Teacher Meeting.

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 your child 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.

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.

“Mol an óige, agus tiocfaidh sí”



Code of Conduct & Discipline

SCHOOL RULES

A: For my own safety and that of others:

- (1) I should never leave the school grounds.
- (2) I should always walk in the school building.
- (3) I should remain seated at all times.
- (4) I should not climb on walls, buildings or trees.
- (5) I should not bring scooters, roller skates, skateboards, roller blades or any thing that might endanger my own safety or that of my fellow pupils.

B: Caring for myself and others:

- 1) I should bring a note of explanation following absences or being late.
- 2) I should keep my classroom and school clean by putting litter in the bins.
- 3) I should show respect for my school and be proud to wear the complete uniform every day.
- 4) I should bring a sensible, nutritional lunch to school on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, which are healthy lunch days.

C: For gross misdemeanours i.e. aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil:

- 1) Malicious and wilful damage to school property.
- 2) Aggressive threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil.

The principal will sanction immediate suspension pending discussion with parents. Expulsion will be considered in an extreme case in accordance with R130 (6).

Policy on Homework

Members of Working Group

- Mary Dillon Principal
- Sarah O'Grady Deputy Principal
- Maeve Stynes Special Duties Teacher
- B.O.M.

1. Why give homework?

- To re-inforce what the child learns during the day.
- To provide a link between teacher and parent
- To develop a child's concentration skills and develop a work ethic
- Homework is meant to be achievable by a child, i.e. it provides an opportunity to practice work already done. The teacher in class normally prepares it. However, sometimes with senior classes, some homework is designed to challenge children's ability and provide opportunities for creativity.
- Children are expected to do their homework to the best of their individual ability - no more, no less.

2. How often is homework given?

- Homework is given on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays but not on Fridays.
- There are two exceptions:
 - ◆ if homework has been neglected during the week
 - ◆ in senior classes some project work is undertaken at weekends.

Sometimes at the discretion of the class teacher or the principal, children are given "homework off" as a treat or as acknowledgment of some special occasion

- Please note extra homework may sometimes be given during the week or at the weekend if a child has not done homework, made a suitable effort or presented untidy work.

3. What is the content of homework?

- Ideally homework will contain a balance between reading tasks, learning tasks and written tasks.
- This balance is not always possible and can vary considerably from day to day. However, it should be noted that homework time devoted to reading and learning is as important as written work.

- Homework will regularly contain reading, spellings, tables, written work, pieces to be "learned by heart", drawing/colouring, collecting information/items and finishing work started in class.
- Children often feel that reading and "learning by heart" is not real homework. Parents can play an important role in listening to reading and items to be learned ensuring this work is done well.

4. How much (time) homework?

The following are guidelines for time spent at homework. Different children will complete the same homework in different lengths of time. Time spent will vary from day to day and also from the beginning to the end of the school year. It is important to remember that it is the quality and not the quantity of homework that matters. The following are general guidelines only:

Junior Infants	0 - 10 minutes
Senior Infants	Up to 20 minutes
Rang 1	Up to 30 minutes
Rang 2	Up to 40 minutes
Rang 3	Up to 50 minutes
Rang 4	Up to 1 hour
Rang 5	Up to 1 hour 15 minutes
Rang 6	Up to 1 hour 30minutes

Homework is given from Monday to Thursday. Normally there is no homework at weekends or on a school day just before a public holiday. However, children in middle and senior classes may sometimes be required to work independently on projects at weekends

5. How much help should parents give?

- Parents should try to help their children with homework by:
 - ♦ providing them with a suitable place and time to do their homework
 - ♦ to prevent interruptions or distractions, like T.V. or other children
- Children should do written homework themselves and parents should only help when the child has difficulty
- If a child has difficulty with homework, the parents should help the child to overcome the difficulty with further explanation or examples, but not by actually doing the homework for the child. In this case the parent should write a note to the teacher explaining the problem.
- Shared reading is not homework in the regular sense and it is simply meant to be an enjoyable exercise between parent and child. If it's not enjoyable, shared reading should not be done.

6. How often should parents monitor homework?

- Parents should check and sign a child's homework journal / notebook / copy every evening.

- The pupil's journal is an important record of the child's homework. It is also a valuable means of communication between parents and teachers.
- Ideally, all written messages to your child's teacher should be put in the homework journal (additional pages available at the end of the journal)
- Please check that your child records its homework neatly in the correct page and ticks each item of homework when completed.
- Robertstown N.S. newsletter and other letters to parents are folded and placed in the current day of the homework journal. Please check your child's journal for such notes on a regular basis

7. How often do teachers monitor homework?

- Ideally teachers like to check homework on a daily basis. However with large class numbers it is not always possible to check each child's homework journal every day.
- As children get older and learn to work independently, some items of homework are checked less often e.g. every second day or once per week.
- Some items of homework (and class work) may be checked by children themselves under the direction of the teacher. This can be a useful part of the learning process for children.

8. When should parents communicate with the teachers about homework?

- When your child cannot do homework due to family circumstances
- When your child cannot do homework because she/he cannot understand some aspect.
- If the time being spent at homework is often longer than the recommended amount of time.

9. When should homework be done?

- Each family situation is different - both parents working, child minders, etc. Ideally, homework should be done before any television is watched soon after school while your child is still fresh, however, some children need a break before starting homework.
- Homework should never be left until morning time before school.

Remember

If homework is a stressful experience between parent and child, something is wrong! This leads to poor learning and defeats the whole purpose. Should this happen on a regular basis, please contact the class teacher?

School Uniform

Girls:

The girls' uniform consists of a white/grey shirt, wine tie, grey/wine cardigan/jumper, grey/wine skirt/pinafore, with black shoes.

Boys:

The boys' uniform consists of a white/grey shirt, wine tie, wine jumper and grey slacks, with black shoes.

A school crested tracksuit and T-shirt is available in Kid Stuff, Newbridge and Farrells, Long Mile Road, Dublin, and is only to be worn during P.E. days and when playing football, basketball or on occasions designated by principal/teacher.

Black hard soled slippers are to be worn by all pupils in the school building and must have a shoe bag (available through school) to put shoes into while in the school building.

Code of Behaviour Sanctions Anti Bullying

Code of Behaviour

Aims:

The code aims at:

Creating a caring, ordered environment based on respect and tolerance where each child can feel secure and confident.

Strategies to promote Positive Behaviour:

- * Ensuring that pupils are treated fairly, equally and firmly
- * A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- * Matching work with pupil's abilities. A prize/reward carefully noted by the teacher to ensure that all children at regular stages during the school year are rewarded for effort/behaviour/skill etc. Teachers creating moments of success and then acknowledging them.

- * A comment in a pupil's exercise book
- * A visit to another member of staff or the Principal for commendation
- * A word of praise in front of a group or class
- * Entry of a record of good behaviour in the Happy Golden Book
- * Delegating some responsibility or privilege
- * A mention to a parent - written or verbal
- * Teacher records improvement in the behaviour of a disruptive pupil
- * Implementation of Programmes such as Circle Time to promote positive behaviour

The above list is not comprehensive and consists of examples only.

SCHOOL RULES

Golden Rules:

Children cannot remember long lists of rules. The rules outlined in this policy provide clear guidelines for members of our school community and senior pupils as to what type of behaviour is expected of pupils and adults within our school. The Golden Rules of the Circle Time programme are on display throughout the school. These rules outline for the children what is expected of them, in a language they understand and incorporate our school motto 'Show Respect and Expect Respect'. Children from Junior Infants - 6th classes will be reminded of these rules and will discuss them regularly. It is expected that the children will know them by 2nd class.

Be Gentle	Don't hurt anyone
Be kind and helpful	Don't hurt people's feelings
Be honest	Don't cover up the truth
Work hard	Don't waste time
Look after property	Don't waste or damage things or take things that don't belong to you/wait your turn to talk
Listen to people	Don't interrupt

School Rules:

School rules are devised with regard to the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. It is imperative that adults "practise what they preach" in their interaction with children every day. The School Rules listed below provide clear guidelines for all members of the school community.

- * Pupils enter and leave the school building at all times in an orderly fashion.
- * In the interest of safety pupils must walk within the school building and quietness is expected while children are getting ready to enter/exit class i.e. while queuing, while putting on coats in cloakrooms etc.
- * Pupils are expected to treat all staff members, themselves and each other with due respect and courtesy. Pupils are taught to stand back for an adult, to welcome visitors and to show respect for their elders.

* Bullying is never allowed. Any behaviour that interferes with the rights of others to learn and to be safe is unacceptable.

* Bad language is unacceptable. Inappropriate language if used towards a teacher or anywhere within the school is considered a serious breach of the code.

* We encourage pupils to wear their full school uniform which includes tie and shoes. Black trainers only to be worn with tracksuits.

* Chewing gum, glass bottles, correction fluids, other solvents, matches, cigarettes, alcohol or drugs are not allowed.

* Jewellery is not allowed except for one small stud earring in the bottom of each ear and a watch.

* Make-up is not worn during school times

* Cycling in school grounds is forbidden

* We encourage children to bring healthy lunches (see Healthy Lunch Policy)

* Children are not allowed Mobile phones within the school grounds. If a child is found with a mobile phone it will be confiscated. In exceptional circumstances arrangements may be made between the principal and parents of the child to hold a mobile phone for a child in the office for use after school hours.

* We encourage hairstyles to be kept neat and conventional. For hygiene purposes hair must be tied back.

* Pupils must respect the school building and property. If any deliberate damage is caused, the parent/guardian will be responsible for the cost of repair/replacement.

School Environment:

We pride ourselves on retaining and flying the School's Green Flag denoting an environmentally friendly policy.

* Pupils are expected to value our school environment and to care for it. The school is a litter-free zone.

* To protect the environment, the school is involved in various projects:

Composting: Fruit peels, pencil parings, etc. are collected for the purpose of composting

Recycling: Waste paper and cardboard are collected for recycling.

All other empty cartons drink containers and wrapping papers are considered household waste and are taken home.

Behaviour in Class and in School Building:

* Pupils must not behave in such a manner as to disrupt class work or to cause unnecessary disturbance.

* It is school policy that every pupil listens to the class teacher, works hard; making best use of their time in school and does their best.

Behaviour in the Playground:

- * All pupils have a right to enjoy their time out in the playground in a safe environment at break periods.
- * Misdemeanour consists of any action that puts the safety of self or others at risk.
- * Fighting, rough play or any physical force is never allowed or tolerated.
- * In the interests of safety, climbing on the school railings/walls is strictly forbidden.
- * In the interest of safety when the bell rings during playtimes the children stop playing and walk to their class lines in an orderly fashion. Children do not enter the school building without getting permission from teachers.

Wet days:

- * Children do activities in class based on the class teacher's instructions or supervising teacher's instructions.
- * Children are expected to stay in their places on wet days except with permission from the teacher.

Swimming days:

- * Every pupil listens to and obeys the class teacher.
- * Children walk in line behind the teacher to the swimming pool. No running allowed.
- * No shouting or playing in dressing rooms.
- * Every pupil listens to and obeys the instructor and life guard
- * No running around pool area
- * Swimming caps required. Arm bands needed for beginners and shower socks may be worn.
- * Children do not leave the pool without permission from the instructor or teacher
- * No jumping into the pool from the side - unless under the instructor's directions. No pushing or rough play in the pool
- * Children are expected to dress quickly after each session
- * Hairsprays/gels/spray deodorants are not allowed. Roll-on deodorants are allowed for 4th - 6th class pupils. Shampoo is allowed.
- * No drinks/sweets are bought from the machine.

Tour Rules:

- * Pupils enter/leave the bus in an orderly manner
- * Pupils are expected to arrive 15 minutes before departure time. Parents are expected to contact the school 15 minutes before departure time if child is sick or unable to attend.
- * School Rules apply to school tours
- * Mobile phones and electronic devices are banned on school tours. Teachers will have mobile phones on tour if parents/ children need to get in contact with one another.

- * On the bus pupils must sit in their seats and avoid loudness that would distract the driver
- * Pupils are encouraged to take drinks and sweets at the appointed lunch breaks.
- * Pupils stay in their appointed groups at all times.
- * Pupils wear track suits on school tours
- * Parental/Guardian permission slips allowing
 - a) the child to go on tour and
 - b) the teacher the right to authorise any medical or surgical procedure necessary are returned to the teacher prior to the tour.

Travelling to events outside of the school:

Children receiving lifts from other parents to or from matches or other school events must have permission from their parents to do so.

Children are expected to adhere to the school's code of behaviour at all times and sanctions will be put in place if rules are broken.

Sanctions

The use of sanctions is an important element in the school code.

They are used in a corrective way and are intended to help the child to change and improve his or her behavioural patterns.

* The nature of the misbehaviour and the age of the child will determine the strategy to be employed

Disciplinary Actions and Sanctions to deal with Bullying:

Bullying is a serious misdemeanour and the sanctions applied are the same as those listed below for serious misdemeanours.

- * Apology to the victim
- * A record is kept. Pupil/s write an account of the incident/s that lead to the Bullying behaviour and what they have learned from this episode in their lives - parents must sign this.
- * Pupils may be removed from activity if endangering self or others.
- * Pupil is sent to Principal/Deputy Principal and made aware that suspension could be a possibility
- * In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred the Principal/Deputy Principal informs parents.
- * Suspension procedures may follow if deemed necessary by the school authorities.

Disciplinary Actions and Sanctions to deal with Misdemeanours:

The degree of misdemeanours i.e. minor, serious or gross, will be judged by the teachers and/or Principal based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity/frequency of such misdemeanours.

Examples of Minor Misdemeanours:

- * Interrupting class work/ arriving late for school/ running in school building/not listening and speaking out of turn/leaving seat without permission at break or lunch time/ placing unfinished food in bins/ leaving litter around school/not wearing correct uniform/ being discourteous or unmannerly/ not completing homework without good reason/ bringing sweets and bars to school/ wearing jewellery (Jewellery is not allowed except for one small stud earring in the bottom of each ear and a watch)/ wearing make-up / belongings not named/
- * unsuitable hairstyles, hair not tied back / not bringing explanation notes for absences and homework/ wearing unsuitable shoes/ cycling in school grounds.

Examples of steps to be taken by teachers when dealing with Minor Misdemeanours:

- * The class teacher will normally deal with classroom misdemeanours.
- * Verbal reprimand and reasoning with the pupil, including advice on how to improve, setting realistic targets.
- * Time out from friends and others (to reflect on the misbehaviour).
- * Loss of privileges such as 'Golden Time', Game time, extra recreation time etc.
- * Noting incidence of yard misbehaviour in yard book
- * Note in homework journal or other to parents.

Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with REGULAR occurrences of Minor Misdemeanours:

- * A record is kept of regular instances of misdemeanour.
- Following 5 instances the teacher will contact parents of child to discuss behaviour. Communicating with parents sooner rather than later
- * Following this if the child continues with misdemeanours the pupil is sent to Principal/Deputy Principal.
 - * Principal/Deputy Principal meets parent(s)/guardians concerning behaviour.

Examples of Serious Misdemeanours:

Constantly disruptive in class/ telling lies/stealing/damaging or interfering with another person's property/bullying/back answering a teacher/leaving school premises during school day without appropriate permission/ using or writing unacceptable language/ bringing chewing gum, glass bottles, correction fluids or other solvents to school/ deliberately injuring a fellow pupil or partaking in any activity which would put themselves or others in danger/ deliberately leaving taps on/ misuse of fire equipment/ bringing in mobile phones without permission

Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with Serious Misdemeanours:

- * A record is kept of all serious misdemeanours.
- * Pupils may be removed from activity if endangering self or others
- * Pupil is sent to Principal/Deputy Principal and made aware that suspension could be a possibility

- * Principal/Deputy Principal contacts parent/guardian
- * Suspension procedures may follow if deemed necessary by the school authorities.

Examples of Gross Misdemeanours:

Deliberately vandalizing school property/ aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil. Bringing alcohol, drugs, cigarettes or matches to school.

Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with Gross Misdemeanours:

- * A record is kept
- * Principal/Deputy Principal contacts parent/guardian
- * Suspension or expulsion may be considered

Grounds for Expulsion

- Behaviour is persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process
- Continued presence of pupil constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
- Pupil responsible for serious damage to property

Automatic Expulsion For First Offence

- Board of Management can impose automatic expulsion for certain prescribed behaviours
- Sexual Assault
- Supplying illegal drugs to other pupils in the school
- Actual violence or physical assault
- Serious threat of violence against another pupil or member of staff

Procedure for Suspension:

* Parents are invited to meet with class teacher, Principal and/or chairperson to discuss the gross incident of misdemeanour or serious misdemeanour.

* Communication to parents regarding the suspension of a pupil or the possibility of suspension will be in writing.

* A written statement of the terms and date of termination of a suspension will be given to parents.

* If the suspension of a pupil is for six days, the Principal informs the Education Welfare Officer in writing.

* When a period of suspension ends, the pupil should be re-admitted formally to class by the Principal/Deputy Principal.

* Where a satisfactory resolution of a problem is achieved, a pupil may be re-admitted to school within a suspension period at the discretion of the Chairperson of the Board and Principal.

Implementing The Suspension

Written notification confirming

- Period of suspension and dates
- Reasons for suspension
- Arrangements for returning to school
- Notification of right to section 29 appeal if total no. of days exceed 20 days

Procedure for Expulsion:

* The above procedures for suspension are followed in the case of expelling a pupil from the school.

* Prior to the expulsion of a pupil the Education Welfare Officer must be notified in writing of the school's intention twenty days in advance.

Success Criteria: (by which the policy will be judged)

- * Atmosphere of discipline within the school
- * Children are aware of school rules
- * Staff apply school rules
- * Growth in self discipline
- * Co-operation between parents, teachers and pupils in maintaining the code.
- * Comments or compliments on behaviour.
- * Children working to the best of their ability
- * Class working to the best of their ability
- * Improvements in behaviour

Monitoring and Review:

Each staff member is responsible for the implementation of the Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy. Within the classroom the teacher monitors his/her class. Teachers consider themselves responsible for the behaviour of children within sight or sound of them and respond to any instance of unacceptable behaviour. The principal is responsible for monitoring and reviewing Policy at staff level on a regular basis and reports any review the staff deem necessary to the Board of Management.

The Board of Management (BOM) has ultimate responsibility for discipline in the school under its management and a duty to ensure that a fair code of discipline applies therein. The BOM will ensure the Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policy is reviewed yearly or more often if the need arises.

In registering children in Robertstown National School parents are expected to support teachers in following the policies and procedures of the school. A copy of all policies and procedures is available for view by all parents. Parents are informed at the start of every school year that they may receive a copy of all policies and procedures if they so wish.

Anti Bullying Policy

The school believes that its pupils have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. The school also has a clear policy on the promotion of RESPECT for everybody where it is made clear that bullying is a form of anti-social behaviour. It is important therefore that the school has a clear, written policy to promote this belief, where pupils and parent(s)/guardians are fully aware that any bullying complaints will be dealt with firmly, fairly and promptly.

Bullying is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others. Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, although not condoned, cannot be described as bullying. However when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing it is bullying. Bullying affects everyone, not just the bullies and the victims. It also affects those children who watch and less aggressive pupils can be drawn in by the group pressure. Bullying is not an inevitable part of school life or a necessary part of growing up and it rarely sorts itself out.

TYPES OF BULLYING

PHYSICAL: This includes punching, kicking, pushing, hitting or spitting etc. This also includes damaging property of a victim.

VERBAL: Verbal abuse can take the form of name calling, abusive language, slander, slagging, threats etc.

PSYCHOLOGICAL: This includes isolation - exclusion from discussions/ activities, use of the internet/email/mobile phone to hurt, name call etc. extortion - obtaining (e.g. money, lunch, sweets etc.) from a person by force or threat etc.

Combating Bullying and the Action towards Prevention:

Role of Staff

- The principal and staff exercise constant vigilance in the matter of misbehaviour. Our aim is to prevent misbehaviour rather than control. Positive behaviour is always recognised, affirmed and sought.
- Any complaints of bullying are dealt with quickly, firmly and fairly.
- The principal is informed of any instance of bullying.
- Awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour is addressed in the classroom, at school assemblies, through the school policy on pastoral care and other informal occasions when the opportunity arises.
- Pupils are taught skills and encouraged to report any incident of bullying.

Advice for Pupils

- * Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied, and that it is **WRONG**.
- * Be proud of who you are. It is good to be individual.
- * Try not to show that you are upset. It is hard but a bully thrives on someone's fear.

* Stay with a group of friends/people. There is safety in numbers.

* Be assertive – shout NO. Walk away confidently. Go straight to a teacher or member of staff.

* Fighting back makes things worse- So don't fight back. REPORT to a teacher or parent(s)/guardian(s) instead. If you need support find a friend and both of you speak to the teacher.

* Generally it is best to tell an adult you trust straight away. You will get immediate support.

The teachers will take you seriously and will deal with bullies in a way which will end the bullying and will not make things worse for you.

IF YOU KNOW SOMEONE IS BEING BULLIED:

· TAKE ACTION - Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the bully. It makes the victim feel more unhappy and on their own.

· If you feel you cannot get involved, tell an adult IMMEDIATELY.

Teachers have ways of dealing with the bully without getting you into trouble.

· Do not be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully.

Advice for Parents:

* Look for unusual behaviour in your children. For example, they may suddenly not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to their normal standard, ask for money or begin stealing money.

* Always take an active role in your child's education by enquiring how they are getting on.

* If you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour, inform the school IMMEDIATELY. Your complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow.

* It is important to advise your child not to fight back. It can make matters worse.

* Tell your child there is nothing wrong with him/her. It is not her fault that they are being bullied.

* Make sure your child is fully aware of the School Policy concerning Bullying, and that they will not be afraid to ask for help;

Robertstown National School does not welcome bullies

Procedures for Noting and Reporting an incident of Bullying Behaviour:

All procedures of bullying, no matter how trivial, will be noted, investigated and dealt with by teachers. In that way pupils will gain confidence in reporting. This confidence factor is of vital importance.

1. Serious cases of bullying behaviour by pupils will be referred immediately to the Principal/Deputy Principal.

2. Parent(s) guardians of victims and bullies will be informed by the
3. Principal/Deputy Principal earlier rather than later of incidents so that they are given the opportunity of discussing the matter. They are then in a position to help and support their children before a crisis occurs.
4. Non-teaching staff are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, to the teaching staff.
5. In the case of a complaint regarding a staff member, this should normally in the first instance be raised with staff member in question and if necessary, with the Principal. Where cases, relating to either a pupil or a teacher remain unresolved at school level, the matter should be referred to the School's Board of Management (see Complaints Procedure).

Procedure for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying:

Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour reported by either pupils, staff or parent(s)/guardians. Such incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation to avoid the public humiliation of the victim or the pupil engaged in bullying behaviour. In any incident of bullying, the teacher will speak separately to the pupils involved, in an attempt to get both sides of the story.

All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide useful information in this way:

1. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
2. If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually and then the individuals are met as a group. Each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear about what everyone also has said.
3. If it is concluded that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the Code of Behaviour and Discipline and try to get him/her to see the situation from the victim's point of view.
4. In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, meeting or discussion will take place with the parents or guardians of the two parties involved as appropriate to:
 - a) explain the actions being taken and the reasons for them, referring them to the school policy
 - b) discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions taken by the school.

I agree to abide by the rules of the Code of Discipline as they are now and as they are amended in the future. Any changes will be notified to all parents.

