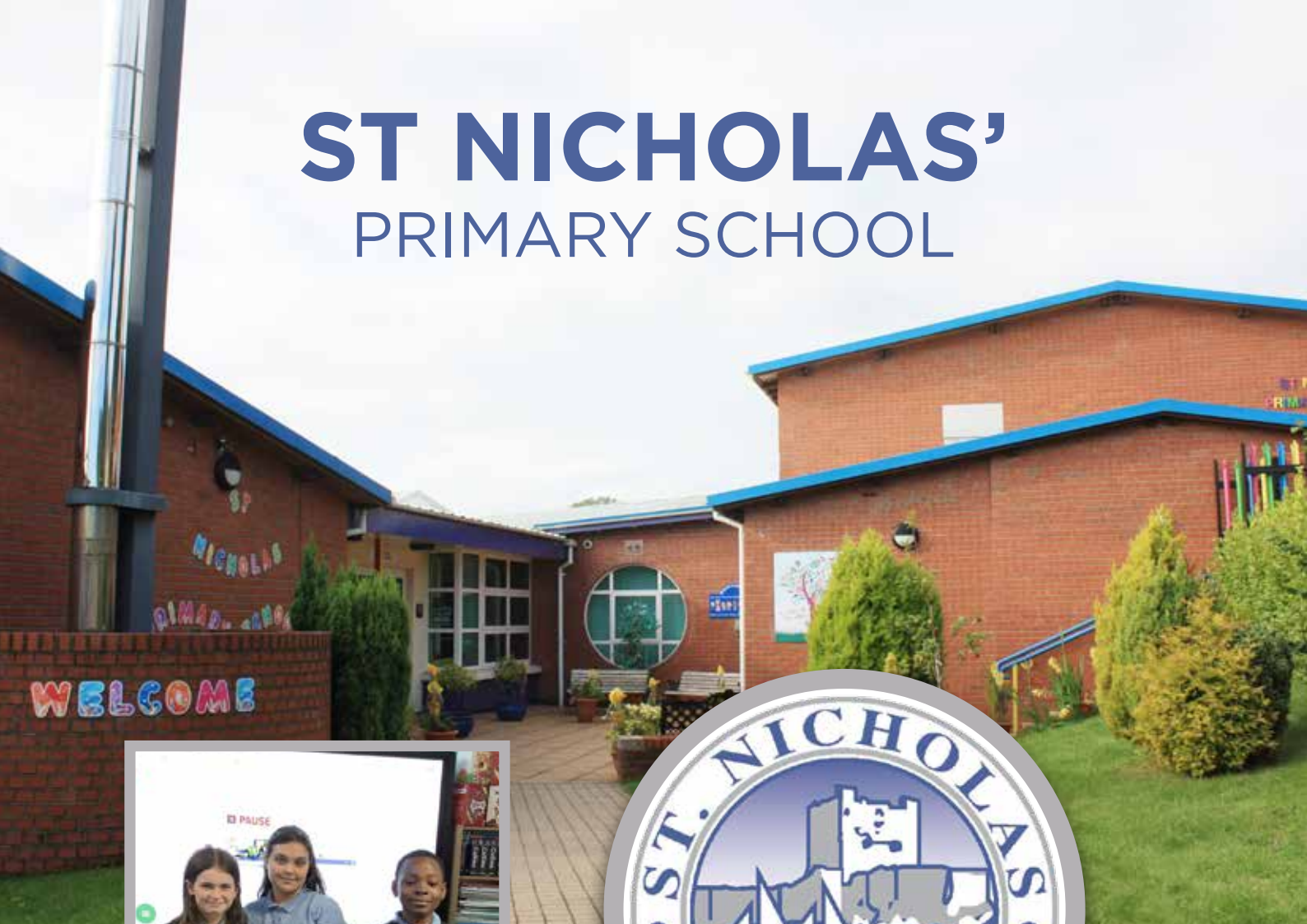


# ST NICHOLAS'

## PRIMARY SCHOOL



### SCHOOL PROSPECTUS

*Inspiring Achievement, Fulfilling Potential!*





# Welcome



## DEAR PARENT / CARER

Welcome to St. Nicholas' Primary School, Carrickfergus.

This prospectus has been written especially for parents/carers to help inform you about the nature and life of our school. We are very proud of our school and its excellent reputation in the Carrickfergus area. We are an innovative and award-winning school. We are constantly striving to improve.

St. Nicholas' Primary School has a passionate and dedicated staff. We strive daily to create a happy and caring school community where everyone loves to learn and is enabled to reach their full potential. Our motto is **"Inspiring Achievement, Fulfilling Potential"** and all staff and pupils are encouraged to set and aspire to high levels of expectation.

We seek to provide an exciting and stimulating learning experience for all our children. We care for their academic, physical, emotional, spiritual and social needs. Our Mission Statement states that: 'St. Nicholas' Primary School is committed to the development of each child's full potential in a climate of joy, challenge, cooperation and celebration in partnership between home, school and parish.'

**Our Diversity is our Strength!** We are open and welcoming to all children from any religious or ethnic background. Children coming into school bring a wealth of knowledge and understanding about the world around them.

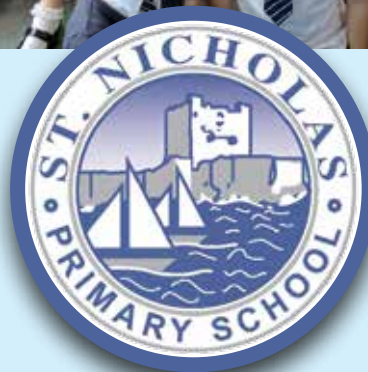
The high level of dedication and commitment from all staff ensures a focus on the positive aspects of work, attitude and behaviour. We recognise that each child is different. We will build on their strengths and help your child work through the areas they need to improve to succeed. We love to celebrate success no matter how big or small.

The school is a vibrant, learning environment with a clear emphasis on displaying children's work and on celebrating their successes and achievements. If you have any queries or difficulties at any time, you are most welcome to contact me or visit the school and I will be happy to discuss matters with you.



Yours sincerely,  
**Miss Geraldine Doherty**

Principal



## ST NICHOLAS' PRIMARY SCHOOL

Minorca Place, Carrickfergus  
Co. Antrim BT38 8AU

**Principal:** Miss G Doherty  
Tel: (028) 9335 1149

**E-mail:** [info@stnicholasps.carrickfergus.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@stnicholasps.carrickfergus.ni.sch.uk)

**Web:** [www.stnicholasps.org.uk](http://www.stnicholasps.org.uk)

**Twitter/X:** @stnicps

**Facebook:**

<https://www.facebook.com/stnicps>



# Introduction



**St Nicholas' Primary School** is situated in Carrickfergus close to Carrickfergus Castle.

St. Nicholas' is a bright, modern new building which has been fully operational since May 1997 and was officially opened in March 1998. There are eight classrooms, four on either side of a central resource area. In addition there is a reprographics room, a central library, an ICT Zone, a Learning Zone, a Sensory Zone, a multi-purpose gymnasium and a school kitchen.

St. Nicholas' has traditionally promoted high standards of attainment and over the years has established an excellent success rate in the Transfer Examination.

The school has rates of achievement in End of Key Stage Assessment in excess of the Northern Ireland average and strives to maintain these standards.

The school is well resourced with a wide range of equipment including eight interactive whiteboards, indoor and outdoor play-based learning equipment, outdoor classrooms, PE equipment and a plentiful supply of book

banded reading books, Accelerated reader books and a well-stocked library.

The school continues to recognise the benefits of ICT and has invested heavily in Apple technology to provide our pupils with state-of-the-art technology and software packages to support their learning.

In December 2021 the school was ICT Mark Accredited by NAACE at Level 2. The award recognizes schools who demonstrate good use of technology to support teaching, learning and school administration. We also hold the Digital Schools Award and are heavily involved with outside agencies to develop ICT.

St. Nicholas' is involved in a host of other initiatives including Shared Education, Peace Twinning and Trailblazers. Currently we have partner schools locally in Carrickfergus. We have links with local universities which provide STEM opportunities and Chinese lessons via the Confucius programme.



# Before & After ...



## Before & After - School Provision:

**As well as availing of a number of services within teaching-time including:**

- RFU Rugby Coaching
- Swimming
- Specialist Music Tuition
- Reading Recovery
- Cricket/Hockey
- Basketball

We also engage with a wide range of external agencies and charitable groups to enhance our curricular provision and inform our pupils of global, local and self-awareness issues.

We have successfully worked with local Council groups, Action Cancer, Trocaire, PSNI, NI Fire & Rescue Service and Sentinus to name but a few.

**In addition, through our After-Schools provision we offer a wide range of activities including:**

- Football
- Knitting Club
- Multisport
- Homework Club
- Spanish

Our pupils can also avail of our 'Morning Club' facilities - an early morning club for pupils to interact, chat, explore ICT and engage in play-based learning activities.

This facility runs from 7.45am and has been a great support to our commuting parents.



## St. Nicholas' is an all-inclusive school.

Our pupils come from all over the world and from **all faith** and **non-faith** backgrounds.

We welcome, celebrate and respect each pupil.

We treat everyone as unique and cater for individual needs.

We have a high percentage of pupils from countries which speak English as an additional language.

We have two school councils – an ECO and a Pupil Council – to give our pupils a voice and to involve them in the decision-making processes within our school.

We have both the **Bronze and Silver Sustrans Awards** for Active Travel. We currently hold three **Green Flag Awards** through the Eco Schools Programme.

We are an Autism NI Champion School and all our staff have received training on implementing strategies to help those pupils with a diagnosis of **Autism and Dyslexia**.

## PARENTAL PARTNERSHIP

We actively promote the development of strong parental partnerships through a programme of parent workshops and regular Parent Teacher meetings.

Our Parent Teacher Association is very active and provides additional funding for the school through regular fund raising activities.

## VISION STATEMENT

St. Nicholas' Primary School is committed to the development of each pupil's full potential in a climate of joy, challenge, co-operation and celebration in partnership between Home, School and Parish.





# Mission Statement



We believe the school to be a vital part of the Catholic Community. We are firmly committed to providing a loving and caring atmosphere, which embodies our Catholic Ethos in which the children can grow and develop to their full potential in all aspects of their life.

We are committed to establishing close links with the home, the parish and wider community.

We, the Governors and Staff of St Nicholas' Primary School believe the school to be a vital part of the Community.

## **We are firmly committed to:**

- the aims of the school
- providing effective education for all our children
- developing pastoral care in the school
- establishing close links with the home, the parish and the wider community.

St Nicholas' seeks to establish an educative community centred on Christ so that His values and gospel message pervade the whole life of the school.







# Statement Of School Aims



- 1** To provide for all pupils a broad and balanced curriculum based on the statutory requirements of the Revised Northern Ireland Curriculum, taking account of the differing needs and abilities of each child.
- 2** To provide for the spiritual, moral, intellectual and physical development of each child in an environment, which is both safe and welcoming and which respects and values the individuality of each child.
- 3** To create a Christian environment which emphasises and reinforces the values of Catholic Christian living.
- 4** To enable the children to communicate by talking, reading and writing competently so as to prepare them for the responsibilities and experience of life.
- 5** To foster close, friendly and co-operative links with the home, local community, neighbouring schools and other support agencies to the benefit of the school and its pupils.
- 6** To develop in the pupils a sense of citizenship with respect for oneself and others and encourage self-control, self-confidence, co-operation, independence and high personal standards of work and behaviour.
- 7** To lay foundations for a lifetime of learning by providing our pupils with active, challenging and enjoyable learning experiences across the Curriculum.
- 8** To provide opportunities for all the children to experience success, win praise and see themselves as valued members of our school and community.
- 9** To train, develop and support teachers in their vital role in developing skills, knowledge and potential in our pupils.
- 10.** To encourage pupils to become confident users of ICT so that they can develop digital skills enabling them to become confident, digital citizens for life and work.

# The Curriculum



When we speak of curriculum in our school we mean the learning experiences that are present for each child. When planning the curriculum we take into account the uniqueness of each child and their individual needs.

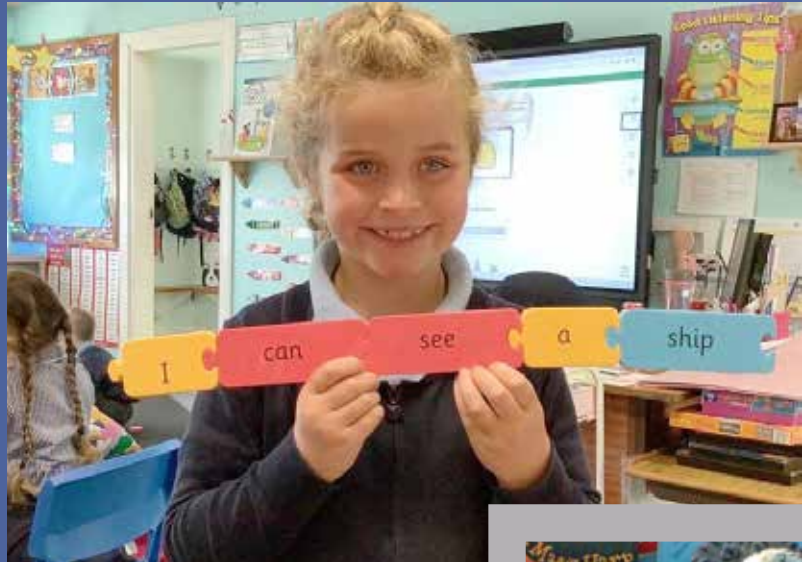
Our aim is to offer each child a broadly based and suitably balanced curriculum in line with the Revised Northern Ireland Curriculum.

## **This involves six Areas of Learning:**

- Language & Literacy
- Mathematics & Numeracy
- The World Around Us
- The Arts
- Physical Education
- Religion

## **In additional there are Cross Curricular Skills:**

- Communication
- Using Mathematics
- Using ICT



## **SPECIAL EDUCATION PROVISION**

We identify the educational and welfare needs of each child and cater for them accordingly.

The identified educational needs of each child will be catered for by his/her class teacher through differentiation ie. group and individual teaching and through withdrawal for further specialised learning and/or support from appropriate agencies such as Educational Psychology, RISE, Barnados, Relax Kids and Counselling Services.

The provision of Special Educational and Additional Needs will be reviewed and assessed regularly by the Learning Support Teacher / Special Education Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo).

Where appropriate, an Individual Education Plan / Personal Education Plan (PLP) will be drawn up for a child in collaboration with all relevant bodies.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

As a Catholic School we promote and foster the development of the Catholic faith. However, Catholicism by nature is inclusive and all are taught to have and demonstrate respect for others. We welcome and embrace children of all and non-faith backgrounds.

Parents can inform the school of their wishes for children to opt in or out of our faith programme and permission is sought at the start of each year to attend church and sacramental services.







# Homework Policy



## HOMework IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE SCHOOL DAY

By extending the child's learning from classroom to home, homework forges an important link between home and school and between teachers and parents.

### AIMS

- to reinforce class work;
- to prepare pupils for new work in school;
- to extend the children's knowledge and understanding;
- to give parents an opportunity to see what is happening in school and to take some share in their child's learning;
- to give pupils a chance to find out things for themselves;
- to promote characteristics such as personal pride in achievement, presentation, initiative and self confidence;
- to provide children with opportunity to develop some independence in their own work;
- to arouse interest and curiosity;
- to simulate imagination.

All children will have oral and / or written homework on a regular basis. Google Classroom and Seesaw are widely used throughout the school as our online platforms for homework. We also provide online personalised learning activities through Studyladder and Freckle Maths to consolidate personal learning targets.

Reading, learning spellings, phonic practice, learning a prayer, learning tables, mental maths games, etc are all important forms of homework. Please consult the class teacher if your child persistently states that he/she has no homework.

### HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

Homework is best done in an environment free from distraction so find a quiet place for the work to be done.

#### Please show an interest:

- Ask questions and talk about the work
- Praise and encourage your child to do their best
- Check that work is properly presented and completed
- Try and avoid conflict with children over homework. This will be counter-productive, create stress and spoil the family atmosphere
- Sign homework if requested by the teacher
- Support and encouragement from parents helps to boost children's confidence and their sense of achievement at "a job well done"
- The development of good study habits and the organisation and completion of homework to a high standard at an early age can help establish a pattern for future study.

Parents will be informed if children persistently do not produce their homework.

### HOMework CONTENT

Content will vary greatly and should include subject areas across the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

There will be a balance between the different types of homework set.

# Parental Involvement Policy



St Nicholas' Primary School is committed to establishing and developing close links with parents/carers which foster and promote the educational progress of their children, bringing the school and community into closer supportive contact.

## AIMS

- 1 To develop a close working relationship with parents based on trust and understanding.
- 2 To stimulate parental interest through invitations to school events.
- 3 To continue to develop as a parent friendly school.
- 4 To establish effective links with pre-school children and their parents.
- 5 To further develop this relationship as the child progresses from class to class and prepares for transition to secondary school.
- 6 To inform and consult with parents throughout the child's school career.
- 7 To be available at specific times to discuss with parents any problems as they arise.
- 8 To enlist parents help with home assignments and encourage parents to develop a good working relationship with each class teacher.
- 9 To promote a caring attitude within the school and between the school and the community.

- 10 To establish and develop effective liaison with all other school agencies for the pastoral and educational benefit of the children.

## SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

St. Nicholas' Primary School adopts a positive approach to discipline expecting pupils to behave in a responsible manner by showing consideration, courtesy and respect for others at all times.

All staff are trained in Restorative Practices to promote positive behaviour.

This standard of behaviour is expected from pupils both inside the school as well as on their way to and from school in school buses.

The school aims to create an atmosphere of "Love of God and Love of Neighbour".

Children are taught to show respect to staff, visitors and to one another. Good behaviour promotes effective learning and the development of application, concentration and honest effort.







# We require ...

## WE REQUIRE OUR PUPILS

- to be punctual for all school activities
- to respect their own and others' property
- to play fairly and for enjoyment
- to refrain from causing injury or distress to others
- to wear school uniform correctly and with pride
- to be courteous and respectful to teachers and supervisors

We seek the co-operation of parents in promoting high standards of behaviour, attainment, and pupil attendance, punctuality, personal appearance and the wearing of school uniform. The wearing of jewellery is not permitted for reasons of safety.

Should the need for pupil suspension or expulsion ever arise, we shall follow the procedure laid down by the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools.

## VISITING ARRANGEMENTS & MAKING CONTACT

It is our aim to involve parents and carers as partners in the education of your children, and to keep you fully informed about your child's progress.

During the course of the year, the staff and I will endeavour to keep you as up-to-date as we can regarding your child's progress and the events that are taking place in school.

- You will receive a half-termly SWAY / newsletter outlining key dates and routines within school. If you think you may be eligible for Free School Meals or subsidised uniform allowance, please speak to a member of staff as soon as possible. All matters are confidential.
- Other key information is also available on the school website:  
**[www.stnicholasps.org.uk](http://www.stnicholasps.org.uk)**
- You will be invited to attend church services, event meetings, assemblies, shows and PTA functions/meetings.
- Teachers will often inform you by Parentmail of upcoming topics, tests, trips or visitors.
- You will have a 15-minute parent-teacher progress meeting in November.
- A written report will be made available in June.
- We would encourage you to sign your child's reading diary/ homework books to record observations.
- We would encourage you to contact your child's class teacher should you have any concerns or need to update us on confidential matters by telephoning the office for an appointment or emailing:  
**[info@stnicholasps.carrickfergus.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@stnicholasps.carrickfergus.ni.sch.uk)**

**\* Please do not forward spam, chain or junk emails**

An appointment can be made to visit the school at any time by contacting the Principal through the School Office or by email.



# School Uniform



## SCHOOL UNIFORM

Uniform gives the pupils a sense of identity and promotes equality within the school.

Uniform can be obtained from Gordons, The Jeanery and Cuddys. Pre-loved uniforms can also be purchased at a minimal cost from the PTA.

### Boys uniform consists of:

- Black/grey trousers
- Black shoes, no trainers
- White dress shirt or blue branded polo shirt
- Navy/white striped school tie
- Navy sweatshirt with school logo

***\*Please note: On special and/or formal occasions pupils are asked to wear school shirt/tie.***

### Girls uniform consists of:

- White blouse/shirt
- Navy skirt/pinafore
- Navy/white striped school tie
- Navy sweatshirt with school logo
- White dress shirt or blue branded polo shirt
- Black shoes

### PE:

- School polo shirt
- Black/dark blue shorts
- Black/dark blue tracksuit bottoms
- Non-slip footwear i.e. gym shoes/track shoes (no black soles please)
- Swim wear (P5-P7). Full swimming one-piece costumes, swimming trunks and hats

It is important that each child comes to school clean, neat and tidy.

All children are encouraged to wear their school uniform with pride and dignity.

Only the official school uniform is allowed.

In the interest of Health and Safety we request that jewellery is not worn to school.

Please label clearly all items of clothing to prevent loss or confusion with other pupils' belongings.







# General Information



## STAFF

The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) employs the teaching staff of St Nicholas' Primary School. At present there are six full-time teachers plus the principal.

The school is well supported by a dedicated and hard-working team of Learning Support Assistants and office staff.

These assistants are deployed to support Early Years Foundation Stage Learning, work with specific pupils with Special Educational Needs and Newcomer pupils to gain confidence in communication and oral literacy. In addition to our staff, the Education Authority at times provide additional staff for specialist tuition and specific services.

## RAISING A CONCERN

Where parents have a concern for their child's progress or wellbeing they are invited to express their concern to the school through contacting:

- 1 The Class Teacher
- 2 The Designated / Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection
- 3 The Principal
- 4 The School Board of Governors
- 5 The Education Authority NE Region / CCMS

Parents are advised to consult the Principal in relation to concerns for any child.

Copies of School Policies are made available to parents via the school website at [www.stnicholasps.org.uk](http://www.stnicholasps.org.uk) or by request from the School Office.

## ABSENCES AND ATTENDANCES

Regular and punctual attendance is a priority for all pupils. A written note from a parent/guardian is required if:

- A child is absent from school
- A child is to leave school early

Pupils may not leave the school grounds during the day. Pupils and parents will be referred to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) where attendance falls below 85%.

## TIMES OF ATTENDANCE

**Primary 1 to Primary 3** 8.45am to 2pm

**Primary 4 to Primary 7** 8.45am to 3pm

**All year groups finish at 2.00pm on Friday.**

It is the responsibility of the parents to ensure that all pupils are collected on time. The KS2 Playground will be supervised from 8.30am. Classes assemble for collection by the teacher and to say the morning prayer at 8.45am.

The school will be open to receive pupils from 7.45am (Morning Club). Class starts for all at 8.45am. Those arriving after morning assembly should enter via the main front door.

Where possible parents and carers are asked to please arrange medical or dental appointments for after-school hours and to refrain from booking holidays during term time.



# School Dinners/Admissions Criteria



Dinners are provided on the school premises. We operate a Set Meal for Primary 1 to Primary 7. At present the cost is £2.60. Application forms for Free School Meals can be obtained online from the Education Authority website. The school dinners are supervised and pupils are expected to be courteous and obedient.

## ADMISSIONS CRITERIA FOR ENTRY INTO PRIMARY 1

The Board of Governors has established the school's admissions criteria and delegated to the Principal its function and responsibilities in relation to their application.

### We will admit:

- 1 Children of compulsory school age belonging to Parish of Carrickfergus who live in Carrickfergus and Greenisland.
- 2 Children of compulsory school age belonging to Parish of Carrickfergus who live in Whitehead.
- 3 Other children of compulsory school age who live in Carrickfergus.
- 4 Children will be admitted on the basis of the surname (as shown on birth certificate) in the order set out by random selection which will change annually.







# Admissions Criteria

## ADMISSIONS CRITERIA FOR ENTRY INTO PRIMARY 2-7

- 1 A pupil will be considered, provided that the school will not exceed its enrolment number as determined by the Department of Education.
- 2 A pupil may be considered if it would not cause a class size to exceed the classroom capacity.
- 3 A pupil will be accepted in order of application.



## Finally

There are so many new and exciting initiatives going on within our school, and such high standards and accolades achieved by our pupils that it would be impossible for me to get them all down on paper.

To experience the real atmosphere of St Nicholas' and to witness first-hand the positive and inclusive environment we promote, I would strongly recommend a visit to our school.

Please feel free to arrange a visit at any time. We will always be happy to see you.

May I take this opportunity to wish you, your child and the extended family a very happy and successful journey along the path to fulfilling your child's true potential.

Should you require any further information at any stage, please do not hesitate to contact me or a member of staff.

On behalf of the Governors, Staff and Pupils of St Nicholas' Primary School, I look forward to welcoming you to join our family.

With every best wish for the future.

**Miss Geraldine Doherty**  
Principal





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