

**SCOIL EOIN BAISDE
CAILÍNÍ NAOIDH**

**ST JOHN THE BAPTIST
INFANT GIRLS' SCHOOL**



**Seafield Road West
Clontarf
Dublin D03 XK27**

**Telephone: 01 8332459
email: secretary@belgrove.ie
www.belgrove.ie**

“Is Deas A Bheith Óg”

Introduction to St John the Baptist Infant Girls' School

Welcome to St John the Baptist Infant Girls' School (locally known as Belgrove). Our School motto is "*Is Deas a Bheith Óg*" – "*It is Nice to be Young*". It is our school's priority to provide a safe, happy and stimulating place into which your child will love to come each day. In the Infant School we aim to provide a warm, caring and happy environment where every child can achieve her full potential, educationally, physically, socially and emotionally. Kindness, care and understanding of children of such a young age help us to achieve our objectives. The religious education programme, *Grow in Love*, is taught throughout the school.

Enrolment, School Staff and Facilities

Here in the Infant School, we accommodate girls from Junior Infants to First Class. The school Admission Policy has been drawn up by the Board of Management. We will have three Junior Infant classes this year, four Senior Infant classes and three First classes. Our staff comprises of the school principal, ten class teachers, a full-time education support teacher, a second education support teacher, a school secretary, special needs assistants and a school caretaker. The library has been relocated to the pre-fab this year. Our accommodation will include ten classrooms - eight with adjoining cloakrooms/art areas, a library/ resource room, education support rooms, a shared school hall and a shared music room. We also have access to the local GAA astroturf facility.

The three Junior Infant classrooms will be located on the ground floor. The classrooms are bright and airy and very well heated in winter. Each classroom has an interactive digital projector, a visualizer and Wi-Fi access. The children also have access to iPads and school cameras.

The principal's office, secretary's office and teachers' staff room are located on the administration corridor. The school yard is just off this corridor. The yard has been re-covered with a soft surface and painted with playground games. Classes are often held in our school garden when the weather is fine. The children care for the garden and with the help of the parents and teachers they plant and sow vegetables and flowers. Our music room is very well equipped with percussion instruments and a piano. The school hall is shared with the Senior Girls' School and we have lots of sports equipment. We also have a wide variety of science equipment.

Board of Management

The Board of Management welcomes all new families to St John the Baptist Infant Girls' School. The Board consists of two nominees of the Patron, two parents' nominees, the Principal of the school, one teachers' nominee and two community nominees. Paul Nolan chairs the Board.

Policies

Our staff and Board of Management update and review all school curricular and administrative policies on a regular basis. These policies are available on the school website www.belgrove.ie.

Parents' Association

We have a very active Parents' Association in our school. Our parents are involved in school activities and organise various events throughout the school year. They are willing to help out at every opportunity and provide invaluable support in practical ways. The Chairperson of the PA contacts parents early in the school year to outline the aims and objectives of the Association and to invite new members to join.

School Uniform

Pupils wear a school uniform in the Infant School, which is available from Lynch's of Marino. The school tracksuit and sensible trainers are worn for P.E. The class teacher will inform parents of P.E days. Velcro fastened shoes save lots of time. Every child's belongings should be labelled clearly so jumpers and tracksuits are easily identifiable. Your daughter will also need an apron or an old shirt for art.

Lunch

There are two lunch breaks: "little break" at 10.30am and "big lunch" at 11.45am. In Junior Infants "comfort food" may be a good idea for the first few days and after that the "healthy option" is best. Parents will be notified about the E.U Milk Scheme in September. Glass bottles are not allowed in school. There are quite a number of pupils with peanut allergies so please do not include nuts or nut extract foods in your child's lunch - this includes spreads such as Nutella.

Accidents and Injuries

In the case of a serious accident, parents or guardians will be contacted immediately. If we cannot contact parents, an ambulance may be called. In cases of cuts or minor injuries, wounds will be washed and cleaned and parents will be informed at going home time. Should a child require the administration of any medication, prior written permission must be sought from the Board of Management. It is vital that the school has up to date emergency contact phone numbers.

Parent/Staff Communication

Parents are always welcome in our school. The Board of Management endorses the view that good communication and effective co-operation between parents and teachers is fundamental to the development of a happy and effective learning environment. To this end a variety of communications is used including texts and emails. School Newsletters are sent home on a regular basis and in so far as possible these and other communications are sent out on a Monday only ("Message Monday"). These should be read carefully as they usually contain important details of special events, outings and school closures.

Complaints Procedure

If there are concerns about an individual child which need to be resolved, these guidelines must be followed:

- a) The parent/guardian and teacher concerned should meet in the first instance to try to resolve the problem.
- b) If there are no satisfactory solutions a meeting may be requested with the Principal to discuss the issues.
- c) Only if matters are still unresolved should an appeal be made in writing to the Chairman of the Board of Management, who has the ultimate responsibility for the school.

Health and Hygiene

Children should not be sent to school if they are not well enough to take part in normal activities. A note of explanation must be sent to your daughter's teacher on her return. However, in the case of infectious illness e.g. chickenpox, please notify the school immediately. The HSE will notify parents through the school with regard to hearing and eyesight check-ups for your child.

As part of our Social, Personal and Health Education programme we encourage regular washing of hands, particularly around eating time and after toilet use. We are not, however, always able to oversee this so please remind your child of its importance. Unfortunately, germs and viruses spread very quickly in a classroom environment so it is vital that the children are encouraged to use a tissue when blowing their nose and to cover their mouth and turn away when coughing. We have adopted the HSE slogan "*Catch it, bin it, kill it*" in order to help prevent the spread of colds and flu infections.

Punctuality

School starts at 8.35am and the children enter the school via the side gate. Children are expected to walk in an orderly fashion into their classroom. The Board of Management does not accept responsibility for children arriving before this time. Children arriving after 8.55am must go through Reception, to their classrooms. Late comers will be recorded. Parents will not be permitted access to the classrooms after 8.55am. Parents of children who are persistently late will be asked to meet with the Principal. New Junior Infants may be brought into their classrooms each morning. It is best not to linger in the classroom with children in the morning as it only prolongs the problem of parting and can be upsetting for the other girls in the class. After two or three weeks children should come in from the cloakroom by themselves.

Dismissal

Dismissal time is 1.15pm. It is important that children are collected promptly at dismissal time as they may become anxious if they are left waiting. For the first few weeks of school, the new Junior Infants will go home at 12.00. Each teacher accompanies her class to their designated dismissal area. Parents should notify the teacher, in writing, in cases of somebody different collecting their child. Early collections must be made through Reception. Parents should send a note to the teacher and the pupils must be signed out by an adult. If a child is not collected, the teacher will bring her to the Principal's office and every effort will be made to contact the child's family through emergency phone numbers. No responsibility is accepted for children left on school premises after the 1.15pm dismissal time. Parked cars either in the morning or afternoon should not block the entrance gate to the school. Dogs are not to be brought into the school at any time - Guide Dogs excepted.

Road Safety

Congestion at the school gates is an ongoing problem with some parents double-parking, making U-turns or parking on footpaths at drop off and collection times. The result is incredibly dangerous: small children weaving in and out of parked and moving cars at the school gate, many of whom are too small to be seen by drivers pulling in and out. In the interest of child safety we would urge all parents to think twice before parking dangerously at the gate. Allow yourself plenty of time so there is no reason 'drop and dash'; park safely and walk to the school with your child. Please note the disabled parking bay is for use by drivers with a disabled parking permit only.

Ethos of our School

It is the aim of our school to provide a broad based education for our children. This involves all aspects of children's development including moral growth and emotional needs as well as intellectual development. Wishing to support this ethos in our Code of Behaviour, we hope that it will encourage our pupils to develop the ability to recognise right from wrong, and the ability to reason.

A minimum of rules is considered preferable to a long list of confusing instructions. By creating a caring and secure environment we aim to reinforce positive behaviour, rather than placing major emphasis on bad conduct.

Parents and teachers are encouraged to see themselves as complementary factors in the education of the whole child. Through mutual co-operation we can best support each child and ensure that the pupils who leave our school will do so with a positive self-image and the confidence born of knowing right from wrong.

The Code of Behaviour is available to read on our website www.belgrove.ie. In our Code the emphasis is placed on the value of positive reinforcement both in the area of achievement and good behaviour with the aim of developing in the pupil an internalised self-discipline.

The Code of Behaviour including the Anti-Bullying Policy is reviewed at agreed intervals. The Board of Management reserves the right to add to or amend this code from time to time as it is deemed necessary following consultation with the whole school community.

Social Personal and Health Education

In line with our school ethos, Social, Personal and Health Education will provide opportunities for the individual child to develop a framework of values, attitudes, understanding and skills that will inform her decisions and actions now and in the future - enabling her to respect and relate to herself and others and become an active and responsible citizen in society.

Relationships and Sexuality Education is part of SPHE. As our pupils are very young we place great emphasis on the importance of developing relationships and "making friends". From time to time the teachers may organise friendship groups to help the girls overcome shyness and find new friends to play with in the school yard.

Anti-Bullying Policy

A revised Anti-Bullying Policy was drawn up by the Board of Management in 2014. We draw your attention to excerpts from the policy below. The full policy is available on our website www.belgrove.ie.

Definition of Bullying

“Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.”

The following types of behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

1. Deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying.
2. Cyber bullying.
3. Identity-based bullying, such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person’s membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour including a once-off offensive or hurtful message, do not fall within the definition of bullying and will be dealt with as appropriate under the school’s Code of Behaviour.

The relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with bullying is the class teacher. However, a pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school and individual teachers must take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school’s Anti-Bullying Policy.

- Under the SPHE programme children will be taught how to deal with conflict and develop their own self-esteem.
- To prevent conflict, children are encouraged to play with children of their own age group and friendship groups are organised regularly.
- It will be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- All reports of bullying will be noted, investigated and dealt with by teachers. In that way, pupils will gain confidence in “telling”. This confidence factor is of vital importance.

School Outings

As representatives of St John the Baptist Infant Girls’ School, children will be expected to behave with decorum in public places. No interference with others or with public property will be tolerated.

CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

The Board of Management of St John the Baptist Infant Girls' School recognise that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of school life and will be reflected in all of the school's policies, practices and activities. The Board has adopted the *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011* and the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017*.

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) in the school is the Principal, Dearbhla O'Driscoll. It is to her that any concern must be initially reported in relation to abuse of any form. The Deputy Designated Liaison Person is the Acting Deputy Principal, Ruth Shannon.

The Board will ensure that all school policies and protocols relevant to child protection are in place. The school's Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment will be reviewed annually by the Board of Management and will be made available to school personnel, the Parents' Association and all parents. In its policies, practices and activities St John the Baptist Infant Girls' School will adhere to the following principles of best practice in child protection and welfare. The school will:

- Recognise that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations.
- Fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters.
- Adopt safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children and protect workers from the necessity to take unnecessary risks that may leave themselves open to accusations of abuse or neglect.
- Develop a practice of openness with parents and encourage parental involvement in the education of their children.
- Fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing the child protection matters.

Please see our full Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment on www.belgrove.ie

RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION

At Primary level RSE aims to help children learn about their own development and about their friendships and relationships with others. The work in school is based on developing a good self-image among the children, promoting respect for themselves and for others and providing them with appropriate information.

The themes covered are: *This is me, We are friends, This is my family, Keeping safe, Showing our feelings, Other people have feelings too, The wonder of new life, How my body works, Decisions and their consequences.*

Holidays and Closures

This booklet contains a list of school holidays. You will be notified if there are any other closures e.g. by letter in advance. In accordance with rule 125.3 of the Rules of National Schools, a school shall not be closed for any purpose without the prior permission of the Board of Management. The school may be closed for the following reasons:

- School vacations, public and religious holidays.
- In-service days.
- In the interest of public health.
- Exceptional circumstances.

Exceptional Closing

Where it is necessary to close the school for exceptional reasons i.e. failure of the heating system, flooding, damage caused by vandals, inclement weather, etc. the Board of Management has agreed the following procedure to notify parents of the reasons for and the expected duration of the exceptional closure:

1. A note will be given to the child at school informing parents of the closure.
2. Notice will be given to parents by text.
3. A notice will be prominently displayed at the entrance to the school.
4. Information will be posted on our school website www.belgrove.ie in the news section.

Parents can be assured that children will not be left unattended at the school whatever the circumstances.

Absences

Since the inception of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, schools are obliged to report on school attendance. Schools are required to submit Student Absence Reports twice each year on those children with serious attendance issues that have been identified during the current academic year i.e. children that have been absent from school for a cumulative total of 20 days or more falling within the following categories:

- Illness
- Urgent family reason
- Holiday
- Suspended
- Other
- Unexplained

As all attendance is monitored it is important to let us know **in writing** the exact reason your child has been absent when she returns to school. A reminder note will be sent out if your child's absence exceeds 15 days.

HOMEWORK POLICY

Aims and Objectives of Homework in St John the Baptist Infant Girls' School

1. As consolidation of work covered.
2. To cultivate the habit of private study.
3. To keep parents in touch with and involved in their children's school work.

Procedures/Guidelines

- Homework should be an integral part of the subject being taught and given in order to consolidate work done.
- Homework must be consistent; a small amount, and given in such a way as to form a pattern for the children so that they are more likely to remember it.
- Parents are encouraged to supervise children's homework, check and sign and ensure that it is neat and in keeping with the standard of their work in school.
- Teachers will check that homework is being done and will give extra help where difficulties occur.
- Homework for Junior and Senior Infants will consist of reading and recognition of new words. Worksheets or workbooks may be sent home to consolidate work covered in school i.e. letter/number formation.
- Homework for First Class will usually consist of tables, spellings and English reading. There may be writing and sums at the discretion of the class teacher.
- Irish homework may include: Reference to the theme being taught in class and relevant phrases included for practice at home, pictures of items relevant to the theme, Irish language games to be played at home, web addresses for parents to use with their children to enhance the language. The teacher may include translation of phrases/words where necessary. The emphasis in Irish homework is informal at all times, in order not to discourage parents' involvement with the language.
- Homework will not be given at weekends except on occasion when a teacher considers that an individual pupil may need it.
- The education support teachers may also set homework.

The time for completion of homework:

- Junior Infants not to exceed 10 minutes
- Senior Infants not to exceed 15 minutes
- First Class homework not to exceed 25 minutes.

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS 2018-2019

New school year starts on Thursday, 30 August 2018.

October 2018 Mid-term Break

Closed from Monday 29 October to Friday 2 November 2018 inclusive.

Christmas 2018

Closing on Friday 21 December 2018 at 12.00 noon and re-opening on Monday 7 January 2019.

February 2019 Mid-term Break

Closed Monday 18 February to Friday 22 February 2019 inclusive.

Where contingency arrangements are required a school authority may reduce the length of the February mid-term break by remaining open up to and including Wednesday, 20 February 2019.

St Patrick's Public Holiday

Closed Monday 18 March 2019.

Easter 2019

Closing on Friday 12 April 2019 at 12.00 noon which will be the final day of the school term, unless changes are required as part of contingency arrangements to make up for time lost due to unforeseen school closures.

Where contingency arrangements are required a school authority may reduce the length of the Easter break by remaining open up to and including Wednesday 17 April 2019.
Re-opening on Monday 29 April 2019.

May Bank Holiday

Closed Monday 6 May 2019.

June Bank Holiday

Closed Friday 31 May and Monday 3 June 2019.

Summer Holidays

Closing on Friday 28 June 2019 at 12.00 noon.

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST INFANT GIRLS' SCHOOL

Our School Motto

"IS DEAS A BHEITH ÓG"

*Is deas a bheith óg,
Is deas a bheith óg,
Is deas a bheith óg,
Tá an saol seo go breá.*

*Gliondar sa chroí,
Is suaimhneas istigh
Buíochas le Dia,
Sin ár nguí gach aon lá.*