

## **School Ethos and Mission Statement**

St. Declan's School is a Catholic Primary School under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Waterford and Lismore. The school aims to teach pupils in accordance with the rites, practices and doctrines of the Catholic Church while at the same time have regard and respect of beliefs of others.

Education in St. Declan's is based on a holistic approach – having regard for the child's spiritual, moral, cognitive, emotional, imaginative, aesthetic, social and physical development. These values are reflected in the methodologies and objectives of the Revised Curriculum (Govt. of Ireland 1999).

The pervading atmosphere of the school is one of harmony – promoting respect and tolerance of difference. Pupils will be enabled to learn in an environment which is safe and secure so that each individual can strive to realise his full potential and take place in society with confidence.

### **General Information:**

Mrs. Ciara Parris is Principal of St. Declan's since October 2022.

St. Declan's is a Roman Catholic School under the Patronage of the Bishop of Waterford and Lismore. It is an all-boys primary school with classes ranging from Junior Infants to Sixth Class.

Presently there are 24 teachers employed in the school including the Principal, 16 class teachers and 7 teachers as part of our Special Education Team. There are also 7 SNA's and 4 preschool teachers working in the school.

### **Board of Management:**

The Board of Management of the school consists of eight members. The Principal, the teacher nominee (voted by the teaching staff), two parent nominees (voted by the parent body), two Bishop's nominees and two community nominees.

### **Parents Association:**

Our school has got a very vibrant and supportive Parents' Association. Each parent of a pupil in St. Declan's is automatically a member of the Parents' Association. Any parent who wishes to become a member of the Committee may do so. The Committee meets regularly on a very informal basis. This meeting is the ideal forum for the

parents to be kept informed of school policies and of events that are happening in the school. These meetings also give parents the opportunity to express their views regarding issues pertaining to the school in general.

**Timetable:**

Junior & Senior Infants	8.30 a.m. - 1.10 p.m.
1 <sup>st</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup> Classes	8.30 a.m. - 2.10 p.m.

**Entering & Leaving the School**

The boys use two entrances to access the school each day. Junior Infants - 2<sup>nd</sup> class use the gate at the Junior end of the school while the boys from 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> classes access the school up the steps and in the front door of the school.

Special arrangements will be in place each September for our new Junior Infant classes.

Once in the yard all boys stay in the yard until the bell goes each morning and they are supervised by the staff.

Parents are reminded that the boys are not allowed to walk on the walls, play/run through the gardens or on the flowerbeds of the schools at any time.

It is very important that all boys are collected on time each day and that no boy is left regularly waiting for long periods at the end of the school day.

Parents enter and exit from the building through the main front door of the school **only**. Access is **not** permitted through the Junior Yard door.

**The Board of Management of St. Declan's does not take responsibility for children outside of official opening and closing times.**

**Punctuality:**

Please ensure that your son is in school on time each day.

The school gates open at 8.20 a.m. All external doors are locked by 8.30 a.m. After that, entrance into the school is through the main front door only.

Punctuality is important and parents are asked to be conscious of the impact and disruption caused by being regularly late.

**Uniform:**

The school tracksuit and poloshirt can be bought at K. Sport, Unit 614, Northern Industrial Estate.

### **Attendance:**

An explanation is required when a boy is absent from school – this should be recorded on Aladdin Connect. If possible medical and dental appointments etc. should be arranged outside of school hours.

If, for any reason a boy must leave the school during school hours please report to the school office to sign your son out.

**The Education Welfare Act came into operation in July 2002. Under section 21 of this legislation the principal of the school is obliged to inform TUSLA in writing, when a pupil is absent for 20 days or more in a school year. (This has to be done whether explanation notes have been provided or not during the year). It is school policy to inform parents when a pupil has missed 15 days**

### **Important School Policies:**

The school Code of Behaviour Policy, the Child Protection Policy and the School Anti-Bullying Policy are all available on the school website or on request from the office. These policies are constantly under review and updated when necessary.

### **Classroom:**

The boys are expected to be attentive and co-operative in class. We expect them to respect each other, to show respect for the authority of the teacher in the classroom and to do tasks assigned to them by the teacher.

### **Playground:**

We have two playgrounds in the school – Junior (Infants – 2<sup>nd</sup> class) and Senior (3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> class). Each class has two break periods each day. All classes are strongly encouraged to play fairly and to solve disputes and disagreements amicably. Any inappropriate behaviour in the playground will be dealt with under the schools Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy.

### **Homework:**

It is the duty of parents to ensure that the boys give homework due time and effort. The class teacher will advise on which copies are to be signed. A copy of the School Homework Policy is available on the school website or on request from the office.

### **Lunches:**

You are encouraged to give your son a well- balanced and healthy lunch each day. Lunches Monday to Thursday will have a strict healthy lunch policy. Friday will be “treat day” and a “treat” can be included in the boys lunchbox e.g. small bar, cake etc.

**Lollipops, crisps, fizzy drinks or energy drinks, nuts or nuts products of any kind are not allowed. Chewing gum is forbidden on school premises.**

## **Schoolbooks**

The Department of Education have provided schools with a grant to buy school books for each child. You will not need to buy any school books for your son. Your son will need some equipment for school, pencils etc. A list of the equipment needed will be provided to you each year. No equipment is needed for Junior Infants.

## **Parent-Teacher Meetings:**

All teachers will meet with parents on an individual basis at the Annual Parent-Teacher Meetings.

Parents who wish to meet with a teacher or the Principal at other times are asked to do so by making an appointment through the school secretary.

The teachers are not available before school in the morning but messages can be sent to them through the staff in the Junior Yard or the school secretary.

## **School-Home Communication:**

The school uses the Aladdin Schools software service [www.aladdin.ie](http://www.aladdin.ie) for administrative purposes and Connect will give you secure access to messages from the school and to details of your child's attendance, test results, reports cards etc via secure login from your internet browser or the Aladdin Connect App.

Data on Aladdin Schools is stored and processed in strict compliance with Irish and European data protection laws.

**By default both parents will have access to view their child's contact information.** If for any reason you do **NOT** wish to share your own personal contact information within the family circle or if you have any concerns regarding your particular family setup please contact the school in confidence to discuss or have this facility restricted.

**Lost Property:**

Please ensure you write your son's name on all his school clothes. Lost Property is an ongoing issue that could be easily addressed if all books, jumpers, tracksuits, coats etc. would bear the boy's name.

**Mobile Phones:**

Boys should not bring a phones to school unless completely necessary. Mobile phones which are brought to school should be left in the boy's schoolbags and are to be switched off at all times. Mobile phones are to be used outside of school grounds only. Confiscated phones can only be collected by a parent.

**Jewellery**

We ask the boys not to wear any jewellery to school except a watch. Smart watches are not permitted.

**Dogs:**

Dogs are not allowed on school grounds.



### **Rainbows:**

Rainbows is available for boys from 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> class. Rainbows is a support programme suitable for children who have experienced death, divorce, separation or any painful transition in their family. The programme is presented to groups of 3 or 4 children during the school day for a period of 12 weeks by trained facilitators. Rainbows is a different kind of helping. It is not counselling or therapy but it can be therapeutic in its results. Information on this programme will be provided during the school year.

### **Internet:**

It is very important that all parents are aware of how their children are using the internet, both on the home computer and on all mobile devices – especially in relation to social platforms like, TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Whatsapp, Snapchat, etc. We strongly encourage all parents to be proactive in this area from the moment your son gets his first phone – to monitor websites visited and frequently ask about messages sent and received (on all the social networks including, X-Box, Playstation, etc.) Active parental vigilance can go a long way to reduce the hurt caused by inappropriate behaviour on the internet.

## Child Protection

In December 2023 two important publications were revised and updated. These were Children's First (published by the Department of Children & Youth Affairs) and Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools Revised 2023 (published by the Department of Education & Skills). Both of these publications are available to read online. These publications form the cornerstone of Child Protection in Ireland. Subsequently all schools were asked to carry out a Risk Assessment and to publish a Child Safeguarding Statement. Our statement is on display in the school and is also available on the school website. A very thorough Risk Assessment involving all staff and the Board of Management was carried out. It is important therefore that you are aware of the following:

1. A sign in/sign out procedure is in operation within the school. This means that:
  - All access to the school/office is through the front door only. If you need to access the school beyond the office you must sign in.
  - You will be asked to sign in at reception for all pre-arranged meetings with staff. You will be asked to sign out again after the meeting.
  - If you have received a call to come to the school i.e. a sick child etc. you will be asked to wait at reception while

Sharon collects your son from class. The adult who collects your son will be asked to sign him out before leaving.

- In the morning time only teachers and sna's will escort the boys to class. Boys who arrive late will be brought to their class by a member of staff if needed. Last minute messages, lunch boxes, homework etc. can be given to a member of staff at the Junior Yard door. He/she will pass this onto the appropriate teacher.

- Only parents requiring wheelchair access will be allowed enter the school via the Junior yard door and must then sign in with Sharon at the office.

2. Please report immediately any one acting suspiciously in the Junior Yard area before school in the morning, in the Junior Yard area before the infants go home at 1.10 p.m. or in the Junior Yard area before school finishes at 2.10 p.m.

3. Parents of infants, including Preschool children, who arrive late in the morning must accompany their son to the office via the front door of the school and not allow their son to enter by himself.

4. Parents of the infants not collected on time at 1.10 p.m. each day must gain access for collection of their son through the front door of the school only.

5. Parents are advised not to approach another child before or after school. Please report any concerns or issues and we will try to resolve them to everyone's satisfaction.

6. Please reinforce the message given by teachers that if your son is not collected for whatever reason after school at 2.10 p.m., that after a ten minute wait, he should return to the office whereby a parent will be called.

7. Parents of all Preschool children and parents of children with SNAs will be asked to sign a note confirming that they are aware that staff have to sometimes manage intimate care needs.

Child Protection is a collective responsibility and we thank you for your understanding and support in this important area.

## **History of St. Declan's N.S.**

In 1932 the Protestant Bishop of Waterford agreed to allow three vacant rooms in the Church of Ireland Model School in Water Street to be used as a school for the local Catholic boys. The De La Salle Brothers agreed to conduct the school, and so on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1932 St. Declan's School was founded. The first Principal of the school was Brother Bernard Foley. His two assistants were Brother Oliver Rice and Brother Leo Carr. The first pupil to be enrolled in St. Declan's was Austin Curtin.

There were two schools under the one roof – the Church of Ireland School with its three teachers, the new Catholic School with its three Brothers – the old model school, the new St. Declan's. Surely an unusual and rather ominous set-up, unheard of anywhere else in Ireland but with good will on both sides the staffs works harmoniously together and assisted each other in every way.

By 1945 St. Declan's had over 200 pupils while the Church of Ireland School was reduced to two teachers. After consultation between the Catholic and Church of Ireland Authorities and the Ministry of Education, it was agreed that a new school should be built in the grounds for the Protestant children and the existing school should be handed over to the Catholic authorities and modernised. The finished building comprised of twelve classrooms, an

assembly hall and ancillary offices all under one roof. The school was beautifully furnished in latest style and had accommodation for 450 pupils. Five extra classrooms were built in 1982.

The De La Salle Brothers continued to conduct the school until 1994. On 31<sup>st</sup> August 1994 Brother Finbar O’Keeffe retired as the last De La Salle Principal of St. Declan’s.

On 1<sup>st</sup> September 1994, Mr. Éamon O’Mahony was appointed as the first lay Principal of St. Declan’s. Mr. O’Mahony was followed by Mr. Doran from 2008-2022. Mrs. Ciara Parris is the first female Principal of St. Declan’s.

St. Declan’s school will always cherish its De La Salle Spirit and tradition. The De La Salle “Signum Fidei” crest is still the St. Declan’s crest and almost all the pupils of St. Declan’s transfer to De La Salle College when they have completed their Primary School Education.