

St. John's Primary School Gilford



School Prospectus 2026-27



ST. JOHN'S P.S GILFORD

42A Castle Hill, Gilford, Craigavon BT63 6HH
Phone: 028 38831555 Email: info@stjohns.gilford.ni.sch.uk
Principal: Mrs S Lyness BSSc PGCE PQH(NI)
www.stjohnspsgilford.com

June 2026

Dear Parent/Guardian,

May I take this opportunity to welcome you and your child to St. John's Primary School.

We value our close relationship with parents and look forward to working with you in partnership to enable your child to achieve the highest standards possible, both in terms of academic progress and all-round personal development.

It is school policy to care for all our pupils equally, to ensure a happy working atmosphere, to promote high standards in all that we do and to foster a positive attitude to discipline, ensuring that each child has every opportunity to develop to his/her full potential.

This booklet has been designed to give you basic information about school life which we hope you will find both informative and useful. Should you require further information please do not hesitate to contact me. You are most welcome to make an appointment to visit our school.

It is our hope that when your children eventually leave St. John's they will have evolved as confident, well developed young people who can look back on their primary schooling as a rich and rewarding time in their lives.

Your sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Sorcha Lyness'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Sorcha' being more prominent than the last name 'Lyness'.

Mrs Sorcha Lyness
Principal

General Information

Meet Our Staff

Mrs S Lyness - Principal

Mrs P Power – SPiM Teacher/Designated Teacher for Child Protection

Mr N King – Teacher/SENCO/First Aider

Mrs McCarthy – Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection

Mr N McParland – Teacher/First Aider

Miss Farnon – Principal Release Teacher

Mrs M Brennan – Teacher

Mrs S-E Hill – Clerical Officer/Lunch time supervisor

Miss R Teggart – Classroom Assistant

Mrs M Lavery - Classroom Assistant/Reading Partnership

Mrs N McCartan - Classroom Assistant

Mrs S Greenaway - Classroom Assistant/Reading Partnership

Miss K Lennon - Classroom Assistant

Miss S McConville - Classroom Assistant

Mrs A McCavigan - Classroom Assistant

Miss A Gallagher - SPiM Classroom Assistant

Miss J-A Quinn - SPiM Classroom Assistant

Mrs P Sands – SPiM Classroom Assistant

Mrs C Gallagher – Building Supervisor/Lunch time supervisor

Mrs L Teggart – Assistant Cook

Mrs C Hume – Assistant Cook

Fr. D Loughran – School Chaplain

Mr P Gallagher – Chairperson of Board of Governors

Our School Day

	P.1/2	P.3/4	P.5	P.6	P.7
Start Time	9.00am	9.00am	9.00am	9.00am	9.00am
Break Time	10.40 - 10.50am	10.40 - 10.50am	10.40 - 10.50am	10.40 - 10.50am	10.40 - 10.50am
Lunch Time	12.30 - 1.10pm	12.30 - 1.10pm	12.30 - 1.10pm	12.30 - 1.10pm	12.30 - 1.10pm
Home Time	12.30pm (for month of Sept)	2.00pm	2.00pm	3.00pm (Mon-Thurs) 2.00pm (on Fridays)	3.00pm (Mon-Thurs) 2.00pm (on Fridays)

School Uniform

Boys	Girls
Navy jumper (with school crest) Blue shirt Navy trousers Navy/blue school tie Plain black shoes (trainers are only to be worn for P.E)	Navy cardigan/jumper (with school crest) Blue shirt Navy pinafore/skirt Navy/blue school tie Navy/white socks/tights Blue/White Dress (summer) Plain black shoes
<u>P.E Uniform</u> Light blue polo shirt Plain navy tracksuit bottoms or plain navy shorts (Summer months only) Trainers	<u>P.E Uniform</u> Light blue polo shirt Plain navy tracksuit bottoms or plain navy shorts (Summer months only) Trainers

School ties can be purchased from the school office
School coats can be ordered from the school office
(O'Neill's half zip with school crest is recommended for P.E but is not compulsory.
These are available from the O'Neill's Store, Craigavon)

To avoid confusion, parents are asked to mark all items of clothing with their child's name. Please remember to keep a check on this, as a name written on by pen can easily become washed off as the year progresses.

School Meals

School meals are provided, and dinner money must be paid online **at the beginning of each week** using our cashless payment system **EZPayments**. We are **no longer** able to accept cash in school and so dinners must be booked and paid for online in advance. It is possible to **'Top up'** your online account and this is highly recommended. A separate letter will be issued outlining how to do this. Dinners are currently **£3.10** per day but this is subject to change. If at the end of the week there is any money outstanding, I'm sure you will appreciate that your child will not be able to have any more meals until the bill is paid.

Applications for free school meals are made via the EA website.

Please note St. John's is a **Nut Free Zone**. It is important therefore, that parents avoid foods that contain nuts eg. peanut butter when preparing school lunches.

Throughout the school we promote healthy eating. There is a healthy break policy where children are only permitted to eat fruit for their morning snack. Children are educated in the principles of healthy eating through the Areas of Learning (Personal Development and Mutual Understanding, The World Around Us and Physical Education).

Communication

It has always been the aim of St. John's Primary School to actively involve parents in the education of their children and to inform them as fully as possible about their children's progress.

The arrangements for consultation are:

Before enrolment:

All new entrants to Primary 1 will be invited, with their parents, to meet their teacher and view the classroom in June.

Any parents considering sending their children to St John's can make an appointment to meet the Principal by telephoning or calling at the school.

After enrolment:

Parents are invited to attend Parent/Teacher Meetings to discuss their child's progress. Each child also receives a written Report at the end of the school year.

Parents are invited to participate in the life of the school by taking part in various activities throughout the year. These include School Masses, Information Evenings, the Book Fair, Christmas activities, Sports Day and other concerts and events arranged to strengthen the home/school partnership.

Parents are very welcome to come to the school to discuss their children's progress or any problems that may arise. To avoid disruption of classroom work the following procedures should be followed:

- Emergency - Parents should approach the school secretary or Principal to arrange an appointment.
- Non-Emergency - Parents should contact the school secretary/Principal or class teacher to arrange an interview at a mutually convenient time.

Parent-Teacher Communication

We would ask parents to please forward a note to the class teacher or email the school office under the following circumstances:

1. To provide the reason for absence from school.
2. If your child is suffering from any medical condition or taking medication.
3. If your child is unable to take part in any school activity for medical reasons.
4. If your child's usual travel arrangements for the afternoon are to be changed or you need to collect your child early.
5. If you wish to make an appointment to speak to your child's teacher.
6. If any domestic or other difficulty is affecting your child's schoolwork. In this case you may prefer to speak privately to the teacher or Principal.

In the interests of Child Protection, the school will contact home if a child has been absent for more than one week and no reason has been provided. It may be necessary to make a referral to Social Services if the school are concerned.

The Curriculum

The Northern Ireland Curriculum in Years 1 – 7 comprises:

- Foundation Stage - Years 1 and 2
- Key Stage 1 - Years 3 and 4
- Key Stage 2 - Years 5, 6 and 7

The Areas of Learning are:

- Religious Education
- Language and Literacy
- Mathematics and Numeracy
- The Arts
- The World Around Us
- Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU)
- Physical Development and Movement (Foundation Stage)/Physical Education (Key Stages 1 and 2)

The Cross-curricular themes are:

- Communication
- Using Mathematics
- Using Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

The Curriculum also develops pupils' Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities. These are transferable skills which are transferable to many curricular areas and will be of use to the children throughout their lives. They are as follows:

- Thinking, Problem-Solving and Decision-making
- Self-Management
- Working with Others
- Managing Information
- Being Creative.

For full details of the N.I Curriculum, see the official website:

www.nicurriculum.org.uk

St. John's is involved in various projects with local Primary Schools through Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, the Extended Schools Cluster Programme, Shared Education with Seagoe PS, Portadown and other established links, all of which greatly enhance the learning and social experiences of our pupils.

We also liaise closely with schools in the post-primary sector, participating in workshops and other projects, in addition to enjoying strong community links with local churches, local businesses, sporting organisations and charity groups.

Assessment

Continuous monitoring of children's work by their teachers occurs throughout the school year.

Standardised tests take place in May for Primary 3 to Primary 7 children.

Running Records (Reading) are completed as and when required.

Parents will be informed of their children's progress in the following ways:

- A yearly interview will be held in October to which parents will be invited to discuss their child's progress with the class teacher.

Teachers are willing to meet parents throughout the year to discuss a child's progress or a concern which has arisen. Please telephone the office to arrange an appointment.

- An annual written report on each child's progress will be issued towards the end of the summer term - June.

Complaints

Queries/concerns in relation to the curriculum are dealt with initially by the child's class teacher. Further complaints may be referred to the principal. If the matter is not then resolved the complaint must be put in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and the school Complaints Policy followed.

Attendance

It is very important that your child attends school every day. Repeated absences can cause children to fall behind with their work, leading to unnecessary upset. Under the current system, pupils are given a mark of attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions. If a child is absent for any reason, please telephone the school or send a note of explanation on their return.

Positive attendance is celebrated at various intervals throughout the year with a focus on maintaining a high standard of attendance throughout the school.

Holiday Arrangements

The school will be closed for the months of July and August and for all statutory holidays.

More accurate information on holidays and other closures will be made available to parents at the beginning of September, in addition to being available on the school App and on the school website.

In the event of an emergency closure, every attempt will be made to notify parents as soon as possible to enable them to make alternative arrangements.

Parents should check that the school has an up-to-date record of addresses and telephone numbers.

Please note parents are encouraged to organise holidays outside term time.

Leaving the School during the Day

Children are never permitted to leave the school grounds during the day without permission. No child will be allowed to leave the school unless accompanied by an adult who should be known to staff.

Pupils must be signed out of school by the adult collecting them and a reason provided as to why they are leaving in line with Attendance procedures. A book for this purpose will be held in the main office and adults collecting pupils should report there.

Religious Education

As a Catholic School, St. John's promotes the philosophy of religion permeating all aspects of school life.

Our core religious education programme is based on the 'Grow in Love' programme. At every level there is a strong emphasis on the personal spiritual growth and development of each child, enabling them to grow in an appreciation of the Catholic faith and in the knowledge and love of God. Pupils participate regularly in a programme of class prayer and school Masses, religious assemblies, prayer services, penitential services, visits to the Church, Carol services and collections for charitable purposes.

The children in Primary 4 are prepared for the Sacraments of Penance and First Communion while the children in Primary 7 are prepared for and receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

The school Chaplain, Fr Loughran, is a regular visitor.

Whilst we are a Catholic school, we are also all inclusive and so actively welcome children from different faith backgrounds. Should you wish your child(ren) not to take part in religious practices, please discuss this with the principal.

Special Educational Needs

Some of the children attending St. John's have special educational needs. As it is the intention of the school to maximise the potential of each of the children the school will endeavour, within its resources, to meet these needs.

The needs of children with learning difficulties are the shared responsibility of the whole staff, but this responsibility is co-ordinated by the Special Educational Needs Coordinator, Mr King.

Where a child with special educational needs is identified, an Individual Education Plan is written. Regular monitoring of the child's progress is carried out and regular contact is maintained between home and school throughout the year.

The school works closely with the Education Authority - Southern Region, in determining some children's particular special needs in accordance with the law. This involves close co-operation

between teachers, school medical authorities, educational psychologists and parents. The EA will make the final decision about the appropriate form of education.

Homework

St. John's regards homework as an important part of the school day.

The school sees a value in children engaging in homework as a means of:

- Consolidating work done in school
- Promoting the discipline of home study and developing good work habits
- Providing opportunities for independent learning
- Involving parents in their children's studies

The responsibility for overseeing the completion of homework tasks lies with parents.

Pastoral Care

The school recognises its responsibility to do everything possible to nurture each child's physical and emotional well-being and with this in mind, will endeavour to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment for learning. The pastoral care policy of St. John's is closely linked to the ethos of the school, and all staff contribute to the delivery and development of pastoral care. It is the responsibility of each class teacher to look after the pastoral needs of the children in their care.

In St. John's all members of staff have a caring commitment to every aspect of school life. The school is a community, an extended family where everyone works for the common good and in partnership with parents, staff strive to create an open, welcoming atmosphere where educational co-operation can take place.

When a child is sick or injured the school will, in the first instance, attempt to contact the parents/guardians or agreed representatives. The parent should then arrange for the child to be collected at the school.

Please ensure that the school has an up-to-date record of addresses and telephone numbers. It would be appreciated if parents would nominate an emergency contact.

In all cases it will be school policy to act in the best interests of the child.

Child Protection

In St. John's we support the principle that every child has the fundamental right to be safe from harm. A Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy has been drawn up in accordance with current regulations. If parents have any concerns, they should contact the school and speak to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Mrs Power or in her absence, Miss McCarthy, the Deputy Designated Teacher or Mrs Lyness, the Principal.

The Safeguarding Policy is reviewed annually, and all staff participate in relevant training accordingly.

Positive Behaviour

Good discipline is essential for effective learning and helps to develop in our children responsible attitudes and values for life. St. John's aims to secure positive discipline by creating an environment within our school that allows each child to grow and develop within rules and guidelines that are fair, effective and consistently applied by members of staff.

It is school policy to promote courtesy, good manners and consideration for others at all times. The school expects pupils to show respect to one another, to the teaching and non-teaching staff and for school buildings and the property of others.

Our School Positive Behaviour Policy actively promotes positive discipline by acknowledging, highlighting and rewarding appropriate behaviour.

Extra-Curricular

A wide variety of activities of an academic, sporting and cultural nature take place within and after school hours under the guidance of staff, tutors and volunteers. These activities are considered to be an important part of school life and aim to foster the development of independence, team spirit and enhance the physical well-being of each individual, in addition to raising pupil self-esteem.

Opportunities to display and celebrate the pupils' range of talents and skills are provided through participation in Sporting Competitions, local Festivals and other parish/community events.

Further Information

If there are any changes to the above due to unforeseen circumstances during the school year, all parents will be informed in writing of the nature of such a change.

The Board of Governors of St. John's Primary School realises that the information given in this prospectus is limited. Parents are encouraged to please check our website www.stjohnspsgilford.com for further information/policies etc. All parents **must** download our school App '**Primary365**' from the App Store or Google Play Store, **entering the school name: St John's PS Gilford** as this is our main form of communication with parents.

We hope that by reading this prospectus you have a fuller insight into our school, however, please feel free to make arrangements with the Principal should you have any further questions or to discuss further our plans for meeting your child's needs.