

How can I prepare my son / daughter for school?

- **Talk to them. Listen to them**

Talk to them as much as possible about what they did, what you are doing, what they watched, whom they met and so on. When talking use names, numbers, mention colours, shapes, sizes etc. Talk about things being big, small, full, empty, over, under, behind, between, first, last, middle etc. Try to extend their vocabulary and their ability to express themselves.

- **Introduce them to simple nursery rhymes**

Please don't feel that you must try to begin reading and writing with your child – playing and talking are much more important right now. Knowing the alphabet or counting to 100 does not guarantee success in school! A happy, confident, vocal child who can concentrate and listen will find Junior Infants interesting and exciting.

- **Read stories to them**

This is vital and should continue until they are fluent readers and beyond (if they'll let you!) Let them turn pages for you. Running your finger under the words while reading will help them see that we read from left to right. Talk about the pictures, ask questions relating to the story, check their understanding and even prediction, 'what will happen next?' and so on. If English is not the primary language in your home read to the children in your native tongue. Never abandon their primary language.

- **Encourage colouring, drawing and painting**

These activities will help to develop descriptive language, naming and describing as well as developing their fine motor skills. They will be proud of their efforts. Cutting, water play, sand, baking, using play dough and making jigsaws are also very useful activities.

- **Ask your son / daughter to complete simple tasks**

Develop this until they can follow a series of two or three simple instructions, 'go upstairs and get...'

Let them set the table, count the knives and forks. Let them help with everyday tasks, sort the laundry, stack the dishwasher, shop with you, cook with you!

- **Encourage your child to be independent**

Show them how to put on and take off their coat and shoes, fasten their own buttons and zips. It would help if you can get shoes with Velcro, a coat that he/she can manage alone and so on. Give them lunch boxes and drinks that they can open. Encourage them to tidy up after themselves. Ensure that they can look after themselves in the bathroom.

Never do for your child what they can do for themselves.

- **Always be positive about school**

School is generally a positive experience for children. Don't use school or their teacher as a threat!

- **School Books**

We source all our books centrally from a local supplier. This way we receive a 12.5% saving which is passed on to you. They buy our books for us and deliver them to the school. Junior Infant books will be covered, labelled and stored in the class. We feel Junior Infants have enough to co-ordinate without struggling with a stack of books! The deposit, €70 for Junior and Senior Infants and €90 for all other classes, you paid during the enrolment process covers the cost of these books. There may be an additional cost for Art and Craft material, Text-a-Parent, photocopying etc. We will deal with this in September.

- **Uniform**

You can purchase our uniform through Kidstuff, Trimgate Street, Navan. Only the crested, grey sweater has to be purchased through Kidstuff. The navy pinafore, navy trousers, white shirt and red tie can be ordered through Kidstuff directly or purchased in any retail outlet e.g. Pennys, Dunnes Stores, Tesco, M&S etc. The children wear the uniform except on P.E., Art and Swimming days. Your teacher will inform you about these days in September. Both boys and girls wear navy or black SCHOOL shoes. Please ensure your child can manage their own shoes. For Junior Infants we recommend Velcro fasteners. Place your order in Kidstuff as early as possible. Do not wait until August.

- **Tracksuit**

The crested school tracksuit is available through Kidstuff also. The tracksuit is navy with, red flashes and school crest. Your son/daughter can wear it on P.E., Art and Swimming days. Your teacher will inform you about these days in September. A standard white polo shirt must be worn under the tracksuit. The children must wear proper runners when wearing their tracksuit.

- **Label everything**

Please label everything clearly with your child's name and check occasionally that their name hasn't washed off over time! Make sure the labels can be easily seen by the teachers i.e. on the inside of the collar is best and not in their pockets or on the cuffs!

Some of our children have their names or initials neatly embroidered onto their jumpers. It has proven to be extremely effective.

- **No toys in school**

Your son/daughter may want to bring a toy into school. This will be discouraged, as the toys tend to distract other children and even cause fights. The toy could get lost or broken, causing upset. Occasionally, children may be asked to bring in something as an aid to phonics, nature, show and tell or maths for example. These objects will be displayed in an appropriate place and returned when that lesson is finished. If your child cycles to school please ensure they wear a helmet. Some families bring their scooters or bicycles in the car and children scoot up the avenue in the morning. Anything to make the journey to school more positive should be encouraged.

- **Art t-shirt**

Your son/daughter will need a big, old t-shirt (an old one of yours or teenage size) that they can easily pull on over their clothes to protect their uniform during Art. Please label it. This will be kept in the school.

- **Outdoors**

We believe there is no such thing as bad weather, the only thing stopping us from going out into the fresh air is a bad choice of clothing. At Ard Rí we have the use of the Rugby Club Campus. We go on regular Nature Walks, have PE on the pitches, outdoor story time etc. Every child must keep a pair of wellington boots in school. Label clearly. Please ensure your child is dressed for the weather with a waterproof

coat every day (remember in Ireland it rains 300 days a year!). In the rare event we get a sunny spell, apply sunscreen and wear a sun hat.

- **The Avenue**

The Avenue between the rugby club car park and the school is a pedestrian area only, with the exception of Ard Rí staff and visitors who hold a disabled permit. Children enjoy the space to run, skip and scoot about.

- **Home/School links**

Check your son's/daughter's bag every day for homework, notes or just to see what they are doing in school; this can act as a key to talk to them about their day. If you need to talk to your child's teacher or the school Principal about anything please feel free to do so. If at all possible come in the morning before school, or in the afternoon after school, and make an appointment. This minimises disruption to class time.

A good rule of thumb is: *If you are wondering whether the school needs to know...the school generally needs to know.*

Keep up-to-date with school life by regularly checking the school website- www.ardrics.ie. You can follow the school on Twitter [@ArdRi CNS](https://twitter.com/ArdRi_CNS). You will get a monthly calendar of events, many of which encourage parental involvement. Getting involved in the Parent's Association can also be a great opportunity to show your child you are committed to the Ard Rí Community and you value education.

- **Healthy lunches**

In Ard Rí we have a 'healthy lunch' policy. The children are not allowed have sweets, biscuits, chocolate or bars (this includes all types of cereal bars) for lunch. They are not allowed fizzy drinks, diluting juice, lollipops, chewing gum, crisps or popcorn at any time.

Yoghurts (including Frubes) and yoghurt type drinks (eg Yop, Actimel etc) are not allowed in Junior Infants. Children simply cannot manage them. We greatly appreciate your co-operation in implementing this policy.

As an 'Active School' a healthy lunch ties in with our emphasis on an active, healthy lifestyle.

To help the children, if you are sending in oranges, please peel them before you put them into the lunch box and if you are sending in bottles of water, please remove the clear plastic cap – this is a choking hazard.

- **Nuts Free School**

From September 2014 Ard Rí must become a 'no nuts school'. No nuts, nut products or chocolate spreads OF ANY KIND are permitted as a number of children now suffer from nut allergies.

- **School bags**

When buying a school bag please select one big enough for an A4 folder, as this will be in your child's bag every day. Make sure that your child can fit their lunch-box into their bag and, with a view to being independent, check that they can open and close their bag easily. Crayons and triangular-shaped pencils will be provided in school. Do pack a small 'lunch' for the first two days even though the children will be in for such a short time, the children will be given a lunch-time and they do enjoy the social element of eating together.

All leftover lunch and packaging will be returned home with children. This is solely to show parents what their child has eaten on a day. If there is a large amount of waste please adjust the amount of food you send with them.

- **Booster injections**

It is recommended that all parents contact their own G.P. with a view to obtaining the pre-school booster injection, which is normally given to children between the age of four and five. The 4 in 1 and MMR Boosters were provided through the school in 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 but this is reviewed by the HSE on an annual basis.

- **Communication**

In September you will be asked to fill out a contact sheet, listing contact details and alternative 'phone numbers in case of emergency. Please fill this out completely and if you do not currently have a person whom we can contact in the event that we cannot contact you, make sure to organise one before September. This person needs to be available and within a reasonable distance from the school. Also please clearly indicate which number you would like used for our 'textaparent' facility.

- **POD-Primary Online Database**

Department of Education, the details of which will be uploaded to the Primary Online Database, a database of all children attending school in the Irish state.

The school is contactable on 087-1341007 from 8.30-4.30 on school days.

E-mail on DRoe@lmetb.ie; this address is checked (almost) daily.

- **School times for new Junior Infants**

Tuesday 29th ¹, Wednesday 30th, Thursday 31st August and Friday 1st September:

10.00 to 12.00

Monday 4th September to Friday 8th September (inclusive): **9.00 to 12.00**

Monday 11th September to Friday 15th September (inclusive): **9.00 to 1.00**

From Monday 18th September and on: **9.00 to 1.40**

You will receive a calendar of opening days for the school in September. A termly table of events will be provided. There is also a calendar of events on the community noticeboard and on our website. We do our best to advise parents of forthcoming events in plenty of time.

It is important to have your child in school on time every day so as not to disturb the class. On the first or second day they will be shown their 'lines' and this is where they will congregate in the mornings after that. Parents are responsible for children in the yard before 9am. When the teacher collects their class, allow your child to walk in with their class on their own. Children only past the blue doors. If they begin to rely on you hanging up their coats it can be a very difficult habit to break. It is also very important to collect your child on time in the afternoon, they may become upset if they feel they are being left behind.

¹ Junior Infants come to school one day earlier than the rest of the school. 2017 Junior Infants have their first day on Tuesday 29th August from 10-12am all other children start school on Wednesday 30th August.

- **Before the first day**

There will be orientation days in June and a summer camp in July for your child to attend. These are great opportunities to get used to the faces, sights and smells of the school. Try on the uniform and tracksuit. Wear it around the house and put it on for visitors. Play make-believe school. Come to the school in July and August. Park in the car park and walk up the avenue. Have your son or daughter show the school to their grandparents. If the school is open, which is very possible in late August come in for a visit.

- **On the first day!**

Be brave, Mammies and Daddies! Don't cry in front of your child and don't give out to them if they do. If your child starts to cry, don't panic. It is no reflection on you or the teacher. The classroom will be full of toys, activities and new friends, your child will soon settle down. There will be no pressure on you to leave but try to slip out as soon as you can and come back promptly at **12.00**. The children generally settle down much more quickly when you have left. We will contact you if there are any problems once you have gone.

As with all school events parents are allowed to take photographs but to protect all children we would ask you do not share these publically on social media.

Tea, coffee and plenty of tissues will be supplied on the first morning (29th August) in the school hall.

We know that this is a huge event in the life of every family. We want your child to be the very best they can be just the same as you do.

Welcome to the Ard Rí Community.