



Welcome to St Joseph's Primary School Handbook

December 2022



**Dumfries and Galloway Education Services
St Joseph's R.C. Primary School**

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1. Welcome from the Headteacher

Dear Parent/Carer

Welcome to our school from all at St Joseph's R.C. Primary School. The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with all the key information you will need as your child starts at St Joseph's RC Primary School. If you have any queries about the content of the handbook, or any questions that the handbook does not answer, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

In line with the Education Bill (2015) and the National Improvement Framework St. Joseph's R.C. Primary School aims to ensure that all children are able to reach their full potential through:

- Raising attainment particularly in literacy and numeracy and weakening the link between attainment and socio-economic disadvantage.
- Ensuring early intervention.
- Supporting children to be healthy and active.
- Using data gathered from school, the local authority, children, parents and national organisations to find out what makes a positive difference to children's learning and health and wellbeing.

Yours Sincerely

William J. Burns

Headteacher



Staff and pupils of St. Joseph's R.C. Primary School would like to welcome you to our school and hope you will find this Handbook both useful and of interest.

It was written in order to provide you with important information about our school, our aims, the curriculum offered and many other aspects of school life. As you get to know the school and all who work here we hope that you will enjoy close contact with the school in the many ways described in the following pages.

In an ever-changing society we are aware of our responsibility to prepare our youngsters for the future. Our vision is to:

Make sure all are happy and healthy and feel safe and secure within our Catholic family. We will endeavour to be our best, to learn actively, to achieve great things and make our community proud.

If our vision is to be realised we require to develop a close partnership between home and school in order to ensure that your children have the best educational experience possible.

This school, as a community, endeavours to provide a welcoming and secure learning environment in which individuals can fully realise their potential in a climate of mutual respect.

2. School Aims, Values and Ethos

The staff of St. Joseph's R.C. Primary School aim to ensure the highest possible levels of attainment, achievement and participation for our children. By fostering partnerships with parents/carers, the local community, our Faith Community and support networks in the wider community we endeavour to ensure the educational inclusion of all of our children. We work closely with our Education Authority to develop our aim to be an integrated community school which meets our children's educational, religious, social, emotional and health needs. In our school entrance hall we display our four key aims which are to enable our young people to become:

- Supportive and Successful Learners
- Caring and Confident Individuals
- Respectful and Responsible Citizens
- Inclusive and Effective Contributors

To this end we endeavour to:

1. Deliver a broad and balanced curriculum that provides young people with the best possible learning opportunities and experiences.
2. Ensure that the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church form the basis of our learning and teaching in the delivery of our Religious Education Curriculum.
3. Ensure that all learners are able to realise their potential through the promotion and recognition of achievement and excellence.
4. Provide the highest quality of learning and teaching experiences that enable young people to enjoy their education and develop positive attitudes towards learning.



5. Provide effective support systems for all learners which promote personal and social development and underpin academic achievement.
6. Provide a welcoming, safe and caring environment in which each learner is valued and supported.
7. Improve the quality of learning and teaching through the effective organisation and management of the school's resources.
8. Ensure that the school's promoted staff provide high quality leadership, management and support.
9. Improve the quality of educational experiences for learners through a programme of continuing professional development for all staff.
10. Ensure that every young person enjoys equality of access to educational opportunities, regardless of social or economic background.
11. Build and maintain effective partnerships between the school and our parental body, external support agencies, our Faith Community and our wider community.
12. Prepare young people for responsible citizenship by developing values, beliefs and attitudes compatible with living in a modern, democratic and multicultural society.
13. Ensure that all learners are able to experience a calm, positive and safe environment that promotes good behaviour, self-discipline and respect for others.

We are all committed to ensuring that the St Joseph's R.C. Primary School Community is one in which we aim to:

- Support children to achieve their potential in all aspects of their education and skills for life.
- Encourage children to be motivated, independent and successful learners.
- Establish an open, supportive learning community where all children, staff and parents/carers work effectively as part of a team.
- Provide equal opportunities for all and celebrate diversity.
- Build positive and productive relationships within the school, the Faith Community and the wider community valuing the participation, contribution and commitment of all.
- Ensure that our school community has the capacity and desire to improve and keep pace within an ever-changing world.
- Afford our youngsters opportunities to contribute towards and engage in high quality learning activities.
- Promote high standards of tolerance and respect for others.

3. School Information

Address

St. Joseph's Primary School
Lewis Street
Stranraer
DG9 7AR

Tel. No. Stranraer (01776) 703460
E-mail: soffice714@ea.dumgal.sch.uk
Website: St Joseph's School App (Jigsaw Apps)



Present Roll – 32

Stages provided for: P1– P7

Teaching Staff (including Headteacher):

Headteacher	Mr Bill Burns
Acting Principal Teacher	Mrs. Jackie Anderton

Teaching Staff.

Miss Natalie Lisi
Mrs Rachael Coulter

School Chaplain/Parish Priest	Fr Neil O'Donnell
Support for Learning Teacher	Miss Gemma Smith
Learning Support Assistants	Mrs Angela Hughes Mrs Heather McClenaghan Mrs Steph Sullivan

Ancillary Staff:

School Secretary	Mrs Iona Donnan
Janitor	Mr Gerard McGuigan
Crossing Patroller	Mr Robert Nesbitt
Cleaning Supervisor	Mrs Mary Fox
Catering Manager	Mrs Elizabeth Jones

Director Skills, Education and Learning	Dr Gillian Brydson
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Head of Education: Mr John Thin

Dumfries and Galloway Council
Education and Learning Directorate
122-124 Irish Street
Dumfries
DG1 2PB

Tel. No. (01387) 273600

Education Officer: Mr Andy Margerison



4. Contact Us

The school recognises the importance of developing strong links with parents/carers. To this end parents/carers are kept well informed as to what is happening in the school by means of regular updates / letters, termly information sheets, seasonal factsheets, etc. In addition parents/carers are involved in the life of the school through attendance at Parent Council Meetings, acting as guest speakers, assisting on school outings / fundraising ventures, etc. There is considerable evidence to suggest that the better the quality of parent/carer/teacher support for the child the more that child will gain from the experience of being at school.

Parents/carers can visit the school at any time in the school day. If parents/carers are collecting pupils for an appointment for the doctor, etc. a note should be sent to the teacher so that the pupil can be got ready in time. All phone call messages will be written on special notelets and passed on to the appropriate member of staff. Parents/carers will be invited to come into school to parents' afternoons/evenings, concerts, meetings, social events, etc. **All daytime visitors to the school are asked to call at the office on their arrival in the building / playground.** Visitors should ring the bell at the main door entry system and await the arrival of a member of staff who will arrange entry into the school building. Please be patient if no one is immediately available. The security door system has been installed in order to protect the school community.

In order to make more efficient use of available time parents/carers are asked to make an appointment if they would like to speak to the Headteacher or a member of staff. Parents/carers are always welcome in school but needless to say there are times in the day when due to their teaching commitments staff are not readily available to meet with parents/carers. However, when an appointment is made, a time which is suitable for both parent/carer and teacher will be arranged and this should make for improved communication between home and school. **Please note that parents/carers are required to call at the school office in the first instance and not go directly to class bases.**

Should a parent/carer have any concerns regarding their child's welfare or education they should, in the first instance, contact the school and arrangements will be made to discuss the matter with the Headteacher. It is hoped that any matter can be resolved at school level by parent/carer and Headteacher. Education Services operate within the complaints handling procedures for Dumfries and Galloway Council. Information on this can be found at <http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15382/Complaints-procedure>

Education Services aims for enquiries, concerns and complaints to be dealt with at as local a level as possible, preferably at individual school level. Individual schools are supported to ensure that matters of complaint are recorded, acknowledged and responded to within normal complaints handling timescales, normally responding within 10 working days. Issues arising at a school level should be brought to the attention of the class teacher and/or the Headteacher as appropriate. Further support and advice can be provided to individual complainants or teaching staff through contacting either the complaints handler within Education Services or the Council's Corporate Complaints Unit.

If you need to find out something or have a concern

We can be contacted by e-mail, telephone, group call text messages or face to face. Where it is not possible to resolve enquiries straight away, we will make arrangements to follow up as necessary with the most appropriate member of staff.



If you have a complaint

A comment might be some brief feedback about how we have handled a situation or delivered a service. It is best to pass a comment straight to the school so that we can take any necessary action. If you are not happy with the response you receive or a decision that has been made, you can Ask us to Look Again.

You can do this by contacting

EducationSupport@dumgal.gov.uk.

At this point an Officer will contact you and discuss the issue and share directly with you the outcome of this work. Remember you can also access Dumfries & Galloway Have Your Say at

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/17349/Have-your-say>

5. How the School Works

Enrolment

Parents/Carers may opt for a place in any school they wish, at any time, but priority for a place will be granted to Roman Catholic children from the recognised or 'delineated' catchment area. St. Joseph's R.C. Primary serves the town of Stranraer and the surrounding area known as the Rhins. Information regarding catchment areas can be found on the Council's website by accessing "Find My Nearest"

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15086/Find-my-nearest>

Full details on how to enrol or move school are available from the school or on the Council's website.

Moving From Nursery

Primary staff work closely with nursery staff from the various town nurseries and parents/carers to ensure that information about each child's learning and achievements is passed on. This will help ensure that their learning and development continues without interruption. Staff will also share other information which will help the teacher to support each child's learning – for example relevant health issues, friendship groups and preferred ways of working.

The School Day

School starts at	9.15a.m.
Morning interval	10.45a.m. to 11.00a.m.
Lunch	12.30p.m. to 1.15p.m.
School closes	3.15p.m. for whole school



Clothing

All Dumfries and Galloway schools must have a dress code which encourages pupils to dress in a way appropriate to attendance at school. This code must not lead to direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of race, religion, gender, or disability. Clothing which is unacceptable in school under any circumstances would include items which:

- Could potentially encourage factions (e.g. football colours).
- Could cause offence (e.g. anti-religious or political slogans).
- Could cause health and safety difficulties such as loose fitting clothing, dangling earrings.
- Are of flammable materials which may be a danger in certain classes.
- Could cause damage to floors.
- Carry advertising, in particular for alcohol or tobacco.
- Could be used to inflict damage on other pupils.

Parents in receipt of a grant for footwear and clothing from the authority will be encouraged to purchase items which are in accordance with the school dress code. Guidance is available on Clothing Grants from the Pupil / Parent Support Unit on

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15246/School-clothing-grants>

While it would not normally be the policy of the authority to exclude a pupil from school solely on the basis of his/her dress, persistent refusal to respond to a reasonable dress code could be deemed to be a challenge to the Headteacher's authority and thus be detrimental to the well-being of the whole school community. In such circumstances, a headteacher could justify the use of the school disciplinary procedures.

The uniform is:

- Grey skirt/trousers
- Maroon sweatshirt/cardigan (gold school logo)
- White shirt/blouse/polo shirt
- Maroon and gold tie
- Red gingham dress for summer wear

Parents / Carers are welcome to call into the school to have a look at the school uniform. Parents/Carers are asked to label all items of clothing and footwear with a permanent marker.

School Meals

School Meals are naturally D&G local provenance for a sustainable future. Detailed information on school meals is available at

<http://www.dumfriesandgalloway.scottishschoolmeals.co.uk>

Pre-ordering lunch

All menus are nutritionally analysed, offering a fantastic choice and flexibility. Primary schools have introduced an advanced pre order system for lunch.



Special dietary requirements

For food allergy and intolerances; medically prescribed diets; or diets for religious or cultural reasons specific meals for children of different ethnic origin may be catered for. Ask the school for a registration form or call 030 33 33 3000 and ask for Facilities Operations (Catering)

Free School Meals

Free School Meals are provided for all pupils in Primary 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. Younger children at nursery or older pupils at primary may also be eligible for free school meals in certain situations as well as those families on qualifying benefits. For more information on free school meal entitlement visit

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/schoolmeal>

or contact Education Support Services on 01387 260 493

School Transport

Free school transport is available for some school children attending primary or secondary school if they live within the school catchment area and if they meet certain criteria. For more information and guidance visit

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15245/Freeschooltransport>

Attendance

It is your responsibility as parents to ensure that your child/children attend school regularly. For the safety of all children it is important for you to telephone the school office prior to/at the beginning of an absence.

Absences are recorded in class registers and frequent or irregular absences not supported by a reasonable excuse, will be notified to parents and the matter may be referred to the Attendance and Liaison Service.

If possible please, try to make dental/medical appointments outwith school hours. However, if this is not possible please inform us in writing or by telephone of the appointment and arrange to collect your child from school.

Absence from School

Pupils who need to leave school during the school day ie doctor /dentist appointments, must be collected by a named contact confirmed with the school office. They must also report to the school office on their return to school.

Class Organisation

At St Joseph's R.C. Primary we currently have two mainstream classes which incorporate all children from P1-P7. Legislation presently states that multi-composite classes may have no more than 25 pupils in each class. When individual primary age groups require to be split we do this through taking account of chronological age (i.e. dates of birth). Our class make up will vary from year to year depending on the number of pupils that we have enrolled within the school.



Playground Supervision

At St Joseph's R.C. Primary we ensure that pupils are well supervised within the playground at all times. Each session we agree a timetable identifying a member of staff who will be in the playground during morning interval and lunchtimes. Those supervising keep a close eye on the children being watchful and alert to a variety of issues ranging from accidents to inappropriate behaviour and will intervene when necessary. Staff will, however, consistently encourage children to develop independence and resilience. If it is felt appropriate issues are reported to a member of the teaching staff or a member of the School Management Team and these are then dealt with accordingly.



Positive Behaviour and Celebrating Success

The school community encourages and develops positive approaches to behaviour. Our general principals are:

- Pupils are expected to conduct themselves in an orderly and polite manner at all times during the school day both inside school and in the playground.
- Pupils should observe the instructions given to them by all staff in order to ensure their own safety and that of others in addition to ensuring care and respect for their own property and that of others.
- Pupils are expected to work diligently in class at all tasks set for them by staff members.

Classroom Code

At St Joseph's R.C. Primary we always strive to:

- Respect everyone
- Listen carefully
- Talk politely
- Try our very best!

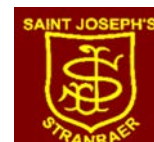
'All children are treated equally, fairly and with respect by all teachers and other adults. They in turn treat all staff with respect'. (Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools)



School Rules

It is of considerable help to the school if parents/carers are aware of school rules and assist school staff in seeing that they are understood and followed by their children.

1. No pupil or class may be released from school earlier than the usual time without the Headteacher's permission.
2. Pupils with dental or medical appointments may be released by the Class Teacher only after contact has been made by the parent / carer (letter / telephone) and after the Headteacher is consulted.
3. Parents/Carers of pupils of ten years of age or younger are required to call for pupils for such appointments.
4. Children should not come to school before 8.50 a.m. unless prior arrangements have been made with school staff.
5. Children will be taken into school on very wet days at 9.00a.m. at the interval and at lunchtime. School Staff and Primary 7 monitors will supervise the pupils.
6. Football supporter scarves, strips and hats should not be worn at school.
7. Children are asked not to cross in front of the gate cars use. They should go in the nearest pedestrian gate and walk round the back of the school to their playground, and exit the same way.
8. Parents/Carers are asked not to bring cars into the school environment but to collect and deliver children to the school gates. There is ample parking in The Ryan Centre which may be safely used by parents/carers.
9. Pupils will respect school property: furniture, fittings, grassy areas, etc.
10. Pupils will not drop litter. Pupils should use the bins provided both inside and outside the building for litter.
11. Chewing gum is not permitted on school premises.
12. The carrying of glass receptacles and aerosols is forbidden in school.
13. Bad language will not be tolerated.
14. Pupils will obey and respect the instructions of all school staff.
15. Pupils who misbehave when partaking of a school meal may be asked to dine elsewhere.
16. Mobile phones should be handed into class teachers/office at the start of the school day and picked up prior to the dismissal bell at 3.15p.m.



6. Curriculum for Excellence

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) is bringing learning to life in the way education is delivered for all 3-18 year olds – in nursery, primary, secondary, at college, workplace or community learning. It aims to raise standards, improve knowledge and develop skills, closing the gap between the lowest and highest performers. Ultimately it aims to nurture children and young people as successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

Broad General Education

Children and young people work their way through Experiences and Outcomes in each of the five Curriculum Levels (Early, First, Second, Third, Fourth) and in each of the eight Curricular Areas.

Curricular Levels span pre-school to the end of S3. This is the Broad General Education. Pupils progress at their own pace, working through the Experiences and Outcomes of the most appropriate level for them.

How does Curriculum for Excellence work?

- The 'learner journey' will be joined up from 3-18 to avoid gaps and overlaps in learning and to make the most of achievements outside school.
- Learners will work at a pace that suits, with enough challenge and support to stretch them.
- Lessons will be more engaging, inspiring and relevant to everyday life.
- Teachers will make connections between subjects, helping children make sense of the world.
- Children will learn how to learn and how to use their learning, not just memorise information to pass tests. This will help them adapt in an uncertain future with the ability to think for themselves, make sound judgements, challenge, enquire and find solutions.
- There's more focus on knowledge and skills – including vital skills: literacy and numeracy, which underpin all learning and are critical in life.
- There are changes to assessment and how progress is reported to give learners, parents /carers and employers better information on potential and achievement.

Subject Information

The curriculum areas are:-

Languages

There are two aspects of the languages component of the curriculum. The first covers experiences and outcomes in the language a young person needs in order to engage fully in society and in learning: English Language. For some young people with additional support for learning needs this may be the means of communication which enables them to communicate most effectively, e.g. sign language. The second aspect covers experiences and outcomes in additional languages: French and Spanish in St Joseph's Primary.



Learning through the language component of the curriculum enables children and young people to:

- Develop their ability to communicate their thoughts and feelings and respond to those of other people.
- Develop a high level of skills in listening, talking, reading and writing which are essential for learning, work and life.
- Use different media effectively for learning and communication.
- Develop a secure understanding of how language works, and use language well to communicate ideas and information in English and other languages.
- Exercise their intellectual curiosity by questioning and developing their understanding, and use creative and critical thinking to support ideas and arguments.
- Enhance their enjoyment and their understanding of their own and other cultures through literature and other forms of language.
- Develop competence in different languages so that they can understand and communicate including, for some, in work settings.

In line with advice from the Scottish Government our Education Authority has introduced the teaching of modern languages into the Primary School Curriculum. The modern languages taught in this school are French and Spanish.

Mathematics

Mathematics includes specific aspects of numeracy which will be developed both in core mathematics learning and through activities in other areas of the curriculum.

Learning through mathematics enables children and young people to:

- Develop essential numeracy skills, including arithmetical skills which allow them to participate fully in society.
- Develop a secure understanding of the concepts, principles and processes of mathematics and apply these in different contexts, including the world of work.
- Have an understanding of the application of mathematics, its impact on our society past and present, and its potential for the future.
- Establish firm foundations for further specialist learning, including for those who will be the mathematicians of the future.

Social Studies

Social Studies includes experiences and outcomes in historical and geographical, social, political, economic and business contexts.

Learning through social studies enables children and young people to:

- Broaden their understanding of the world by learning about human activities and achievements in the past and present, political, social and environmental issues, and the values underpinning their own society and other societies.
- Develop the capacity for critical thinking through accessing, analysing and using information.
- Form their own beliefs and view of the world and develop their understanding of different values, beliefs and cultures.
- Establish firm foundations for lifelong learning and, for some, for further specialised study and careers.



Technologies

This curricular area includes creative, practical and work-related experiences and outcomes in craft, design, engineering, graphics, food, textile and information technologies.

Learning through technologies enables children and young people to:

- Develop an understanding of technologies and their impact on society-in the past, present and future.
- Apply knowledge, understanding and practical skills to design and create products, processes and solutions that meet needs in play, work and daily life.
- Gain the confidence and skills to embrace and use technologies now and in the future.
- Evaluate technological processes and products critically and constructively, taking account of cultural, ethical, environmental and economic factors.
- Experience work related learning and for some, establish the foundations for more advanced learning and careers in the technologies.

Expressive Arts

The Expressive Arts include experiences and outcomes in Art and Design, Drama, Dance and Music.

Learning through the expressive arts enables children and young people to:

- Express themselves in different ways and be creative.
- Experience enjoyment (and contribute to other people's enjoyment) through creative and expressive performance and presentation.
- Develop important skills specific to expressive arts and also transferable skills.
- Develop an appreciation of artistic and cultural values and ideas.
- For some, prepare for advanced learning and future careers by building foundations for excellence in the expressive arts.

Religious Education

One of the 2 class teachers in St Joseph's R.C Primary School has the approval of the Roman Catholic Church to work in our school. This approval is given to practising Roman Catholics who have undergone/are undergoing recognised and accredited training in the delivery of religious education as approved by the Roman Catholic Church.

Our Parish Priest, Father Neil O'Donnell, is an occasional visitor to the school and provision is regularly made for our children and staff to attend liturgical services in St Joseph's R.C. Church.

In addition our children are prepared for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation whilst in attendance at St Joseph's. All families are encouraged to support and help children participate in Church Services. The school attends St Joseph's Church, along with our Faith Community, for the celebration of Mass on a monthly basis.

Pupils at St Joseph's R.C. Primary also study other world religions developing an awareness of and respect for the religious beliefs held by others and recognising that religion is an important expression of human experience.



Please note that parents/carers have the right to withdraw their child from participation in the delivery of the RE curriculum. Should this be exercised the school will endeavour, within the constraints posed by staff availability, to ensure that alternative arrangements are made for their child.

Health and Wellbeing Education

Health and Wellbeing includes experiences and outcomes for Personal and Social Development, understanding of Health, Physical Education and Physical Activity, and contributions from Home Economics. It also includes approaches and activities such as physical activity and nutrition, planned by pre-school settings and schools to promote the health and wellbeing of their learners and the wider community.

Learning through Health and Wellbeing enables children and young people to:

- Experience positive aspects of healthy living and activity for themselves.
- Develop the knowledge and understanding, skills, abilities and attitudes necessary for their physical, emotional and social wellbeing now and in their future lives.
- Make informed decisions in order to improve their physical, emotional and social wellbeing.
- Apply their physical, emotional and social skills to pursue a healthy lifestyle.
- Make a successful move to the next stage of education.
- For some, open up opportunities to excel in sport.

The Health and Wellbeing Curriculum includes components that could be deemed to be of a sensitive nature e.g. sexual health. Parents'/Carers' permission, as considered appropriate, will be sought prior to their delivery.

Personal Effects – Health and Wellbeing

Whilst participating in the Physical Education/Physical Activity aspect of Health and Wellbeing children should wear gym shoes (which should not be those worn outside). We request that P.E. kit is left in school from Monday until Friday each week when it should be taken home for washing.

Pupils on occasion wear personal items which may constitute a hazard if worn during physical activity. Watches, rings, chains, bracelets and earrings should be removed before physical activity as part of the regular routine of changing. Clearly, however, if the wearing of such personal effects is kept to a minimum this will have the effect of reducing the problems which may otherwise arise. It is accepted that there may be occasions where a personal adornment cannot reasonably be removed and in such circumstances the wearing of the item may be made safer, both for the wearer and for other participants, by for example placing tape over earring studs. This will be the responsibility of support staff in the lower school: Primary 1-4 with older pupils encouraged to take responsibility themselves.

7. The Wider Curriculum

Extra Curricular Activities

Sports and Outdoor Activities.

The school has internal space for physical education activity and has a range of equipment for the teaching of body movement skills and simple games skills.



As our games/dining hall is relatively small the adjacent Ryan Leisure Centre is booked for one full afternoon/week to support our delivery of physical education. The school playground (hard surface) allows such activities to be carried on outdoors should the weather permit. Basketball, hockey, athletics, badminton and short tennis are taught. Curling is taught to Primary 7.

Swimming tuition is available in blocks of 9 sessions for children in P4.

The school has extra-curricular Netball and Homework Club.

Parents/carers wishing to be of assistance in delivering extra-curricular activities are asked to contact the school at the commencement of the new session in August.

Burns Federation Competition

The school based competition takes place annually in January/February. All stages P1-7 select a Scottish poem and / or a Scottish song. After they are learned and performed, a winner from each class is chosen and presented with a certificate. The overall winners may be selected to go forward to participate in a local competition organised by the "Stranraer Burns Club" in February or March.

School Concerts

School staff endeavour to organise concerts for pupils normally on an annual basis. In recent years the school has put on a Christmas Concert. This arrangement is dependent upon the availability of appropriate specialist time. Parents/carers are cordially invited to attend all school concerts.

Christmas

Parties are organised for each class in December. Santa visits all pupils and gives them a present. In addition our Pupil Council organises a Christmas Disco to which all pupils are invited to attend.

Halloween

Children traditionally attend school in fancy dress for Halloween. Prizes are presented to children selected as winners by a guest judge.

Pupil Councils

Our Pupil Councils are made up of pupils from P1 to P7 who have been elected by their year groups to represent their peers with regard to a wide variety of issues relating to school life. They voice their thoughts, suggestions and opinions on key events and improvement priorities within the school.

The Pupil Councils established following pupil input this session are:

- Pupil Council
- Enterprise Council
- Eco Council

Pupils are allocated roles within their class and whole school such as Pupil Councillor, Events Co-ordinators, Monitors, Gardeners etc.



The children are often elected for roles by their peers or on a rota basis. The children take real ownership over aspects of our daily school life. Additional responsibilities enhance and support the need for developing skills for learning, life and work.

‘Children are now being given more responsibility for aspects of school life such as being involved in the pupil council, eco and sports committees. Children are beginning to take a greater role in improving their school’. (Her Majesty’s Inspectors of Schools)

School Trips

In the summer term opportunities are given to all pupils to go on an educational excursion. At other times of the year, when required, further excursions are organised. We on occasion ask parents/carers to contribute towards transport costs, entry fees, etc. Excursions, performances by outside groups, etc. are subsidised from School Funds. A blanket consent form will be distributed to parents/carers at the beginning of each session to cover, for insurance purposes, permission for children to attend school events outwith the school environment. Consent slips will, however, also be sent to parents/carers for individual trips in order to ensure parental awareness of their children’s attendance at these events and of any specific clothing, packed lunches, etc. required.

The Community

The school aims to play an important participative role in our Faith Community and in the local community. Our staff and pupils are involved in the performance of music for senior citizens, sponsored activities in support of charities, sporting events, religious services, etc. The building itself serves the community being used by organisations in the evenings. The school is extremely grateful to our Faith Community and the local community for its continued assistance and encouragement.

‘The school, in consultation with stakeholders, including the Faith Community, established a Vision, Values and Aims Statement. This has brought the school community together and is leading to improvements’ (Her Majesty’s Inspectors of Schools)

Eco Schools

At St Joseph’s R.C. Primary School we have an active Eco- Committee. Members take on a variety of roles to enhance our aim of being an Eco friendly school. Our Eco Committee is responsible for raising pupil awareness of the key ecological issues such as recycling and energy monitoring, and works in close partnership with our gardeners. They provide feedback to the whole school at assemblies and have worked with our Parent and Pupil Councils.

8. Home/School Partnership

Every parent who has a child at our school is a member of the Parent Forum. The Parent Council is a group of parents who have chosen to represent the Parent Forum. As a member of the Parent Forum, each parent can expect to:

- Receive information about the school and its activities
- Hear about what partnership with parents means in our school
- Be invited to be involved in ways and times that suit you
- Identify issues you want the Parent Council to work on with the school
- Be asked your opinion by the Parent Council on issues relating to the school and education it provides



- Work in partnership with staff
- Enjoy taking part in school life in whatever way possible

More information is available at

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/17608/Parental-Involvement>

More information and support for Parents/ Parent Councils is available at

<https://connect.scot/>

As at December 2022 the Parent Council office bearers were as follows:

Chairperson	Donna Westbrook (Parent)
Vice-Chairperson	Andy Westbrook (Parent)
Treasurer	Iona Donnan (School Secretary)
Secretary	Natalie Lisi (P5-7 Teacher)

Meetings will normally be scheduled on a 6 weekly basis taking place in the school hall.

Parents/Carers are welcome to attend and be involved in the discussions at Parent Council meetings. Please contact one of the parent members if you have an issue you would like discussed at a meeting.

Minutes of Parent Council Meetings will be made available to all parents.

Communicating with Home

The school recognises the importance of developing strong links with parents/carers. To this end parents/carers are kept well informed as to what is happening in the school by means of weekly updates / letters, group call text messages, termly information sheets, seasonal factsheets, the School App, etc. Parents/carers are invited to attend school in September/October, January/February and in May/June to discuss the progress made by their child/children and to agree learning targets.

An Interim Report, with agreed learning targets, is distributed to parents/carers during Term 1 with a final report issued to families in Term 4. Parent/Carer Drop-In Sessions are arranged for Term 1 for parents/carers of children in Primary 1.

There is considerable evidence to suggest that the better the quality of parent/carer/teacher support for the child the more that child will gain from the experience of being at school.

St Joseph's School App

Our School App, which was first introduced during Session 2014/15, further develops and improves our communication with parents/carers, family members and the wider school community.



Find the St. Joseph's School App by searching in your phone/smart device's App Store for 'Jigsaw School App'. Download the app and, once opened, select St. Joseph's R.C. Primary School'.

Homework

Homework has an important place in supporting the curriculum offered by St Joseph's R.C. Primary School. It should be seen as an integral part of learning rather than something separate so that working at home is a meaningful extension of what is done at school.

Homework can help pupils in their learning by:

- Providing a link between home and school in order that parents/carers may become familiar with the range and variety of resources and learning and teaching experienced by their children.
- Providing parents/carers with regular opportunities to assist in their children's education.
- Providing pupils with appropriate opportunities to consolidate prior learning and benefit from extra practice.

With this in mind parents/carers are asked to practise certain exercises at home e.g. colour recognition, counting, spelling, nursery rhymes, etc. Parents/carers are further asked to provide material, time and opportunity for reading: in the case of infants it is particularly helpful if parents/carers can listen to and be familiar with their children's reading.

A note of homework set will be recorded by the teacher or, in the case of older pupils, by the pupils themselves in a homework diary/jotter. Parents/Carers are asked to sign the homework diary/jotter when their children have completed the homework set. If homework is not completed an explanation from the parent/carer should be written in the homework diary/jotter. If homework is causing difficulty or anxiety for a child parents/carers should contact the class teacher in the first instance

How is my Child Doing? – Reporting and Assessing

The school assesses pupil progress and learning on an ongoing basis with teaching staff utilising their developing knowledge of the Curriculum for Excellence and through professional dialogue with colleagues e.g. Additional Support for Learning Teachers.

Parents' afternoons/evenings are normally held annually in school in September/October, January/February and May/June for P1-7.

An appointment system operates during our Parents' Afternoons/Evenings and the school actively encourages all parents/carers to be in attendance. Where the time allocated does not suit parents/carers should contact the school to make alternative arrangements. It is our aim to meet with all parents/carers to discuss individual pupil targets/progress. During the Parents' Afternoons/Evenings parents/carers may view their children's work and discuss targets and progress made. Prior to the September/October Parents' Afternoon/Evening a Settling In Report will be issued for each child with a full progress report distributed to parents/carers in May/June.

We see your child's education as a partnership between home and school.



We appreciate that with the continual development of educational practices more and more parents/carers are keen to find out in greater detail what their children learn in school and how. To this end we will endeavour to build upon our programme of information sessions when parents/carers are provided with opportunities to learn of teaching methods, resources used and to ask questions. There are of course many other occasions such as fundraising events, social activities such as concerts, sports day, etc. when it is hoped you will choose to participate in the life of the school.

‘The school has significantly developed communication with, and involvement of, parents in terms of curriculum innovation and sharing learning with their children at home’ (Her Majesty’s Inspectors of Schools).

Helping the School

At St Joseph’s R.C. Primary School we actively encourage parents/carers to be involved in the work and life of the school. There are a variety of opportunities that arise throughout the year. Some examples are:-

- Joining our Parent Council
- Accompanying classes on outdoor excursions
- Volunteering to assist with school activities e.g. football, netball, craft, cooking, costume making for concerts etc.
- Assisting with Eco projects – gardening etc.
- Visiting classes to talk about a particular hobby or your career

Helping your Child

- Listen, talk and encourage – this can have a big influence on children's learning
- Encourage your child to talk to you about their learning, what learning is happening at school and do what you can at home to build on that
- Talk to your child about their strengths and interests and how they are progressing
- Encourage your child to talk to you about their next steps in learning and find out how you can work with the school to support this
- Ask for help if you think your child needs it for any reason.
- Praise your child if he/she is working hard at something or has achieved something within or out of school
- Encourage any reading
- Look for opportunities at home to develop literacy and numeracy skills: money, number problems, time, measuring, matching, size, reading, writing, understanding instructions, questioning information etc



- Encourage your child to take part in activities e.g. hobbies, clubs etc which will provide opportunities to develop a range of skills
- Help them work on tasks on their own and then talk about it with you afterwards
- Do things together where appropriate – learn together e.g. if your child has a project or task to do, take an interest and discuss with them what he/she is doing or offer support if this is needed.
- Help prepare for change particularly at key transitions – talk about the change together.
- Talk to them about how they are feeling
- Work together with the school by taking part in discussions about your child’s learning and progress e.g. at parent’s nights, reviews etc



Information provided by Education Scotland – Parent Zone

Useful Information

For more information on parental involvement or to find out more about parents/carers as partners in their child’s learning, please contact the school or visit the Education Scotland website –

www.educationscotland.gov.uk/parentzone

9. Support for All

Dumfries and Galloway Council is committed to the well-being and educational development of all learners. The process of inclusion requires all involved in the business of learning and teaching to demonstrate commitment, innovation and flexibility to ensure that all children and young people have access to quality learning opportunities and experiences. More information is available at

<https://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/16163/Additional-support-forlearning>

Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC)

You are the expert on your child and what you think matters. Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) means that the School will always seek to involve you, to listen to your opinions and take them seriously. More information is available at

www.dumgal.gov.uk/girfec

Child Protection

All children have the right to be protected from harm, abuse and neglect. The vision for all children and young people in Dumfries and Galloway is that they should be: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and



included. Schools and front-line education and child care services will play an important role in ensuring all children and young people are safe and well.

Further information can be found at

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/16640/Support-forchildrenand-families>

Parents, carers and pupils have a key role in keeping the school community safe. We would therefore urge parents to share any information which would keep everyone safe, and to support and encourage their child(ren) to do the same.

10. Enrolment in Schools and Moving Secondary School - TRANSITIONS

Information on enrolment in school and catchment areas is available at

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15241/School-places>

Information regarding catchment areas can be found on the Council's website by accessing "Find My Nearest"

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=6293>

11. School Improvements

In May/June of each year, the school publishes a Standards & Quality Report providing all stakeholders with a comprehensive summary of the school's work and learners' achievements over the last year. The first part of this report provides an overview of the school's progress in addressing its key priorities, while the second part gives information about, for example, how well pupils are learning and achieving; how well the school is supporting children/young people to develop and learn.

In June, we publish a School Improvement Plan which outlines the key priorities for the school during the year ahead, following engagement with staff, pupils and parents.

The plan indicates the expected impact of priorities on pupil learning, as well as providing brief information about the key tasks to be taken forward. Both the report and the plan are available in hard copy, on request.

In Session 2022/23, St Joseph's RC Primary School's key priorities are as follows:

Priority 1 - Raising Attainment & Achievement (Including Learning, Teaching & Assessment)

Priority 2 - Partnership working, Wellbeing, Equity & Inclusion

12. Health and Safety

Emergency Procedures

If your child feels ill during the school day and we feel that he/she would be better at home, we will telephone you or your emergency contact. Minor accidents, e.g. cuts, bruises, etc are dealt with by the school staff.



Serious accidents are few, but should one occur your child will be immediately taken either to your doctor or to hospital, if necessary, and you or your emergency contact will be notified.

We cannot stress enough the importance of supplying the school with the relevant information we require in such a situation, i.e. your own home and work number and a telephone number of an emergency contact. Please remember that if your child stays in more than one home setting contact details should take account of this.

Severe Weather and School Closure

Arrangements

Headteachers are authorised to make an emergency closure when the state of the weather or any other exceptional circumstance make it necessary in the best interests of the pupils. In these circumstances parents will be communicated with in a variety of ways including text messages/ phone calls and emergency contact arrangements. All school closures will be notified on the Council Website.

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15240/Emergency-school-closures>

Data Protection

Information on how the Council uses personal data is available at

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15129/Data-protection>

ICT in Schools

Use of the Internet, Social Networking Sites

As part of the process of learning we allow our children supervised access to the Internet and e-mail. The authority runs its own filter system to ensure that young people are not at risk from exposure to inappropriate material. This filtering system is regularly being upgraded. We have a policy for use of the Internet and a contract for responsible use, which we ask parents and young people to sign up to.

Please Note

Whilst the information included within this Handbook was considered to be correct at the time of printing it is subject to change prior to the time when it is made available to parents/carers. The school will endeavour to provide parents/carers with accurate and updated information on an ongoing basis.

