



## Welcome & Information for Parents 2023



Dear Parents /Guardians,

Welcome to Ballinteer Educate Together National School.

We are an equality-based school under the Department of Education and the patronage of Educate Together. Our ethos is inclusive and welcomes children from families of all faiths and none. We are co-educational, child-centered and democratic, and actively encourage participation and partnership with parents/guardians in line with our policies. Equality and justice are important to us and we ensure that no child is an outsider and the individuality of each child is nurtured regardless of race, religion, gender, age, or educational ability.

We work to give equal opportunity to all the children in our school to reach their full potential at their own rate, academically, socially, emotionally, physically and spiritually.

We are a 16-class school with two streams of each class - Junior Infants to Sixth class. This school year, we will also have two classes for children with autism.

Ballinteer Educate Together is a happy school where high academic standards are achieved in an atmosphere of enquiry, respect and kindness. Children may be enrolled in the year prior to the start of a new school year by submitting an online form on the school website [www.ballinteeretns.ie](http://www.ballinteeretns.ie) during the annual admissions period (usually October). The exact dates of the annual admissions period will be posted on our website each September. Applications to join the school midyear should be made by emailing the school's principal at [info@ballinteeretns.ie](mailto:info@ballinteeretns.ie). If you would like to contact the office please email ([info@ballinteeretns.ie](mailto:info@ballinteeretns.ie)) or phone our secretary, Ellen, at 01-2963017

Sincerely,

Paul O'Dwyer  
Principal

Calendar for School Year 2023-2024

## 1 STARTING 'BIG SCHOOL'

Starting 'big school' is a very exciting time for your child. For some children it can be a little daunting at first, however you can help them by being positive and enthusiastic about it. Here at Ballinteer Educate Together National School, we work to make sure that the children make new friends quickly, and that they are at ease socially in the playground. There are also many ways you can help your child and ensure that these new experiences will be happy ones.

### INDEPENDENCE

Children tend to be more relaxed, confident and self-sufficient in school when they can:

- Put on/take off/hang up coats; manage zips/buttons.
- Carry their own schoolbags
- Open/close schoolbags and lunch containers
- Eat lunch independently – peel an orange/banana; open a yoghurt container/ cheese packet
- Use a tissue to clean his/her nose
- Recognise his/her own belongings
- Manage the toilet independently: use and flush; wash and dry hands without help.

### PREPARATION FOR LEARNING

Some ways to give your child a head-start in Junior Infants are:

- Read to your child and chat about the story
- Enjoy nursery rhymes, songs and poems together
- Give simple instructions
- Encourage longer sentences
- Develop clear speech informally and uncritically
- Use colour, number and time-related words, e.g. red car, five apples etc.



## 2 OPENING AND CLOSING TIMES

Ballinteer Educate Together National School starts at 8.15 a.m. Class begins immediately and we encourage parents to have their children in school on time. Children are also encouraged to hang up their own coats and be responsible for taking their bags and lunches into the classroom. School ends at 12.55 for Junior and Senior Infants; and at 13.55 for all other classes. Parents of Junior Infants are welcome to bring their children to the classroom door for the first few days, though we encourage independence from the beginning as it promotes a sense of well-being and confidence in the children. For the first week or so as necessary, starting times are staggered for our new Junior Infants – more information will be provided closer to the time.

### 3 CLOTHING

Children at Ballinteer Educate Together National School do not wear a school uniform as we encourage individuality. However, please ensure that children wear suitable and age-appropriate clothing and footwear that allows them to feel comfortable, and enables safe and free movement during playtime and P.E. activities. Young children frequently misplace their belongings: please label all clothing and footwear clearly. Velcro-fastened shoes are ideal for children. We find that laces are not suitable for Junior Infants. They can be a distraction, a safety hazard and don't encourage independence.

### 4 HEALTHY EATING

Children eat a morning snack and midday lunch. We promote healthy eating and ask that you provide your child with healthy, well-balanced food and drink each day. No crisps, popcorn, chocolate, sweets, chewing gum or sugary drinks are permitted. Due to allergies in the school, we ask that you exclude nuts. We ask kindly that parents do not send cakes and treats into school to share with their child's class.

### 5 BIRTHDAYS

We ask that arrangements to do with birthday celebrations are organized by parents outside of the school. Each class has a parent class rep who retains class contact details.

### 6 CURRICULUM

At Ballinteer Educate Together National School, we follow the National Primary School Curriculum as laid down by the Department of Education. We provide a stimulating and challenging educational environment, where the emphasis in every area of the curriculum is on discovery, analysis, problem-solving, expression, and in ensuring that each of our pupils reaches his or her full potential. Subjects which are frequently integrated, are: Language (English and Irish); Numeracy; Arts Education (Art, Music, Drama); Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (S.E.S.E.); Physical Education (P.E.); and Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.)



## 7 ETHICAL EDUCATION: THE LEARN TOGETHER PROGRAMME

At Ballinteer Educate Together National School we deliver the 'Learn Together Programme' which consists of four strands:

- Belief Systems
- Equality and Justice
- Morality and Spirituality
- Ethics and the Environment

Formal religious instruction can be organised outside of school hours by parents, and space facilitated by the school and Board of Management; our after-school activities policy has guidelines for this.



## 8 BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Ballinteer Educate Together is managed by a Board of Management made up of eight members: two Patron (Educate Together) representatives, of whom the Chairperson is one; two community representatives; two elected parent representatives, and two staff representatives including the Principal. The current Chairperson is Colette Kavanagh. The Board of Management oversees and is responsible for everything that happens in the school including recruitment of staff, finances and legal obligations.

## 9 HOMEWORK

Homework is an integral part of the curriculum at Ballinteer Educate Together National School. This will be communicated in more depth by class teachers to parents in September.

## 10 ATTENDANCE

In line with the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, we encourage regular and full attendance during the school year. For any absence/leaving school early, we require you email the class teacher and CC the secretary. Please speak to the principal in advance if you are taking your child out of school during term time. Absences of over 20 days must, legally, be reported to an Educational Welfare Officer. A text reminder will be automatically generated if your child reaches 10, 15 or 20 days absence.

## 11 COLLECTION TIME

At the beginning of the year, the school will ask you to complete a form giving the name(s) and contact number(s) of the adults who will collect your child after school. This information will be added to your child's file. The school and class teacher must be notified, for the safety of the children, of any change to this information.

## 12 MEDICATION

In general, the school staff does not administer medicines to children. However, in exceptional circumstances, in consultation with the Principal and Board of Management, special arrangements can be made. Written permission and instructions, as well as a letter of indemnity are required.

## 13 MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS

The HSE operates a schools programme which includes sight tests, hearing tests and the MMR vaccination. On the school's registration form, parents are asked for permission to give their contact details to the HSE for this purpose. No vaccinations or any other medical event takes place without express, written permission from parents.

## 14 ILLNESS OR ACCIDENTS

In the event of a minor accident such as a fall or cut, your child will receive first aid. In the event of a more serious accident or if the class teacher/Principal feels that a child is not well enough for school the parents/guardians will be contacted. In an emergency, an ambulance will be called and the child will be brought to hospital. It is important that the school has up-to-date contact and emergency numbers and that these phones are switched on during the day.

In the case of an infectious disease, or head lice (the latter is common in many primary schools), please report this to the school immediately.

## 15 COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS

At Ballinteer Educate Together National School, we place great importance on open communication. There are a wide variety of ways in which we do this including:

- Website
- Open day for new Junior Infants
- Newsletters
- Annual parent-teacher meetings
- Meetings with class teacher by appointment during the year
- Informal meetings with class teacher/Principal
- Reports on progress and assessments at the end of the year
- Parent Teacher Association



## 16 FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES

Please inform the Principal of any family circumstances that are relevant to your child's school life e.g. separation, custody agreements, bereavements etc.

## 17 POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR POLICY

At Ballinteer Educate Together National School, we adopt a proactive approach to positive behaviour, language, actions and expectations on the one hand, and to anti-bullying on the other hand. Please read our Code of Positive Behaviour on the school website. The staff and Board of Management work to create a climate of social, emotional, physical and intellectual security for our pupils, teachers, parents/guardians and members of the wider school community. Mutual respect underpins every aspect of our school.

In essence, we ask the children to have:

- Kind hands and kind words
- Respect for themselves and others
- Do their best and allow others to do the same
- Be honest
- Come to school on time and be prepared
- Be fair, be friendly, be safe
- Look after our school and everything in it



## 18 CHILD PROTECTION

Child Protection is of paramount importance to us; this policy may be read on the school website. The Principal, Paul O'Dwyer is the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and the Deputy Principal, Órla McCarthy is the Deputy DLP. Their names are displayed on the school notice board.

## 19 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parental involvement is encouraged and welcomed at Ballinteer Educate Together National School. Our Parent Teacher Association has already become a dynamic and vital component of the school. If you would like to volunteer to come into the school and share your expertise with the children, please speak to the Principal and/or the class teacher.

## 20 IMPORTANT MESSAGES

To ensure your child has the best possible start at school and to encourage self-esteem and independence, please remember the following:

- Children should be able to independently pack and unpack school bag. School bag should be a good size to fit an A4 folder.
- Children should be able to independently open and close water bottles and lunch boxes.
- Velcro/ elastic shoes are best.
- Children should be able to independently put on coats.
- Speak with your child about beginning school in a positive way.

**Ballinteer Educate Together  
National School**

Parkvale, Balally, Dublin 14

[www.ballinteeretns.ie](http://www.ballinteeretns.ie)

