**Darkley P.S**

**“Bringing Out The Best”**

**Together in learning we will**

**support and motivate all**

**children to be the best they can be.**

**Parents’**

**Information Booklet**

**2020-2021**

Dear Parents,

The staff and I warmly welcome you and your child to Darkley P.S. We hope that your child will feel at home and be very happy during these important years of primary education.

The main purpose of this booklet is to give you an insight into the school. We, in Darkley P.S are justly proud of our good name and our high academic standards.

Our school aims to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which is flexible, relevant and meaningful to children at Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, so as to provide for the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of each pupil in a happy, caring and warm learning environment.

We look forward to working closely with you during the school year, and hope your child receives a happy introduction to their Primary education.

Yours sincerely

Ciaran Monaghan

Principal

**Our School Aims**

* To provide a broad and balanced curriculum as relevant to the Education Reform (N.I) Order, 1989 that will enable all pupils regardless of age, sex or ability to reach their full potential.
* To create a happy and stimulating environment for the children.
* To encourage each child to become self-disciplined, self-confident and independent within a caring, ordered and safe environment.
* Develop, healthy, fit bodies and equip them with a range of physical skills.
* To foster a desire to learn and take responsibility for their own learning.
* To encourage parents to be actively involved in the education of their children.
* To help children deepen their Christian faith and live it out.
* To develop strong, positive links with the local community.
* To foster each child's intellectual, physical, spiritual, moral, cultural and social development.
* To develop lively, enquiring, imaginative and creative minds with the ability to question and argue rationally.



**Darkley Primary School**

**71 Moss Row**

**Darkley**

**Co Armagh**

**BT60 3BG**

**E-mail:cmonaghan632@c2kni.net**

**Tele No: 028 37531484**

**www.darkleyprimaryschool.co.uk**

**Staff**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Teachers**  |  **Classroom Assistants**  |
| Mr Ciaran Monaghan (Principal) Mrs Maeve Mc KernanMrs Elizabeth Carvill Mrs Colette Conlon Mrs Aimee Doyle  |   Mrs. Joan Nugent  Mrs Tina O’Neill  Mrs Brenda Quinn  Mrs Tanya Mc Mullen  |
| **Secretary**  | **Kitchen Staff**  |
| Mrs Maura Farrell  | Mrs. Karen Mallon Mrs. Veronica Mc Birney  |
| **Mid-Day Supervisors**  | **Caretaker**  |
| Mrs. J Nugent Mrs. T O’Neill  | Mrs Christine Callaghan  |

**School Day**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 8.15 a.m Breakfast Club 9.00 a.m.  | Cost £1 per child per day First bell rings, children are allowed into the playground or hall depending on weather. A teacher will be on duty.  |
| 9.15 a.m.  | http://t1.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcQUzaYfXS3bXC14iwYsUdb82c157O9tqMyCISGDjxpfEtayeVDxE2nQMOTVPupils’ day begins  |
| 10.45—11.00 a.m.  | Break time  |
| 12.30 —1.15 p.m.  | Dinner Time  |
| 2.00 p.m. 3.00pm | School day ends - P.1 - P.2 School day ends for P.3 – P.7 |
| **Minding Club P1 and P2** Monday to Friday 2.00pm – 3.00pm | uniform |

£1 per day.

**Enrolment**

At present there are 102 children from P.1 to P.7

enrolled at Darkley Primary School. (Sept 2020)

Admissions to Darkley P.S, is regulated through the Open Enrolment Procedure of the E.A. Southern

Region : **www.ea.org**.

The Admissions Criteria for Darkley P.S is agreed by the Governors and published each year.

**Curriculum & Assessment**

Darkley P.S has fully embraced the introduction of the Revised Curriculum which stresses the importance of developing Literacy and Numeracy skills whilst recognizing that an emphasis on personal, social & emotional development is crucial for our young learners. Thinking skills and Personal Capabilities are also developed throughout all of the six revised Learning Areas, namely:

Through training and subsequent detailed planning, teachers in

Darkley P.S ensure that children are provided with opportunities to

develop the knowledge, skills and understanding through a range of worthwhile, challenging, relevant and enjoyable learning experiences. Annually our school sets out detailed plans to support the curriculum and assessment. Assessment is an integral part of the learning and teaching cycle in Darkley P.S.

Children are regularly assessed using a variety of tools and the

outcomes inform the best steps forward for your child. If your child is identified as experiencing difficulties with any aspect of the

curriculum, you will be informed and may be asked to attend meetings whereby targets can be set to plot the way ahead and so forge a partnership for improvement.

**Religious Education**

A new programme called ‘Grow In Love’ has been phased in over recent years and has replaced the ‘Alive O’ programme that the school was following. This programme incorporates fully the proposed Core Syllabus for Religious Education in Grant Aided School in Northern Ireland.

**Keeping You Informed**

Assessment is an integral part of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. The main objectives of Assessment are to underpin and inform teaching, and to establish what each child

A) Knows

B) Can do

C) Understands

Class teachers assess children in different ways for example by

continuous assessment, oral, practical and written tests.

Parents will be informed of their children’s progress by:

A yearly review, generally at Halloween, in which parents will be informed of the schools view of the child's progress and also, of any information given by assessments.

Parents will receive a yearly written report; generally in June on each pupils progress. Any parent wishing to discuss their child’s report may do so at a time mutually agreeable to parent/guardian and class teacher.

**Language and Literacy**

Children will have access to a wide variety of play activities and will be encouraged to talk about their experiences, ideas, feelings and achievements to one another and to the teacher during the course of their play. Language will also be developed by encouraging children’s appreciation of books as being enjoyable, informative and stimulating. Children will have opportunities to listen and respond to stories, nursery rhymes, poems, jingles and songs.

**Reading**

**Reading is one of the most important activities in a child’s education and we ask that parents read regularly to and with their children.**

One of the methods of approaching literacy activities in our school is through Linguistic Phonics. Within this programme the initial emphasis is on developing attention and listening skills and oral language. This is followed by a focus on phonological awareness so that children learn how to identify syllables, rhyme and eventually, individual sounds within words. Each sound is then matched with its corresponding letter or letter-combination.

**Emergent Writing**

All children will begin Primary 1 at a different stage, outlined below. We aim to provide many opportunities within the classroom for your child to develop their handwriting skills and become confident when taking part in associated activities.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Stage** | **Example** |
| **Preliterate: *Drawing*** * uses drawing to stand for writing
* believes that drawings / writing is communication of a purposeful message
* read their drawings as if there were writing on them
 | stages1a |
| **Preliterate: *Scribbling*** * scribbles but intends it as writing
* scribbling resembles writing
* holds and uses pencil like an adult
 | stages1b |
| **Early Emergent: *Letter-like forms*** * shapes in writing actually resemble letters
* shapes are not actually letters
* look like poorly formed letters, but are unique creations
 | stages1c |
| **Emergent: *Random-letters or letter strings*** * uses letter sequences perhaps learned from his/her name
* may write the same letters in many ways
* long strings of letters in random order
 | stages1d |
| **Transitional: *Writing via invented spelling*** * creates own spelling when conventional spelling is not known
* one letter may represent an entire syllable
* words may overlay
* may not use proper spacing
* as writing matures, more words are spelled conventionally
* as writing matures, perhaps only one or two letters invented or omitted
 | stages2a |
| **Fluency: *Conventional spelling*** * usually resembles adult writing
 | stages2 |

**Mathematics and Numeracy**

Early mathematical concepts are important for everyday life and develop slowly in the young child. In the course of their play children will be given opportunities to sort, match, order, sequence and count. They will begin to understand concepts of size, shape and time and use mathematical language in their everyday play. They will learn number rhymes and songs and listen to stories that have an element of mathematics in them. Children will become familiar with number formation and value.

**The World Around Us**

In order to help children develop a knowledge of their environment they will be encouraged to:

* Talk about their own experiences e.g. holidays, festive seasons and birthdays.
* Talk about the people in their immediate family.
* Explore items in the natural environment.
* Discuss the weather and seasons.
* Talk about where they live and the people in their community.
* Play with simple floor maps and small vehicles discussing road safety and keeping safe in general.
* Become familiar with the school environment e.g. Principal’s office, secretaries office, dinner hall etc.

**Personal Development and**

**Mutual Understanding**

Opportunities will be provided to help children develop personal and social skills, values and attitudes through play activities where they learn to co-operate, to take turns, to share and to explore their emotions.

Snack time provides opportunities to talk about healthy foods and to promote healthy eating habits.

During the course of the day occasions will arise where staff will reinforce acceptable standards of hygiene e.g. hand washing before handling food, after messy play and after using the bathroom.



Independence will be encouraged through simple routines e.g. self registration, posting their name after snack, learning how to handle cutlery properly, putting on their own apron/coat.

Children’s confidence will be enhanced through taking turns to do jobs, visiting other classrooms and taking part in new activities.

We ask that parents encourage independence in their children for example, by asking them to carry their own belongings or letting them put on their own coats. We advise encouraging your child to go into the classroom on their own in the mornings so that they can settle in quickly.

**Physical Development and Movement**

Children enjoy indoor and outdoor play where they experience a sense of fun and success. Physical play, such as running, jumping, climbing, skipping, hopping, balancing, rocking and rolling, throwing, catching hitting and kicking, helps children to develop balance, control and co-ordination as well as an appreciation of distance and speed. The PDM curriculum is split into the following 4 areas:



* Athletics
* Dance
* Games
* Gymnastics

(All 4 areas will be taught at a basic level)

**Learning Support**

**Special Educational Needs**

In addition to normal classroom differentiation a child may need to be monitored more closely or require more support for their learning due to the issues listed below. Our children all develop in different ways and may also learn differently. It is very important that parents recognise this and that the school and parents work together for the good of the child.

There are five stages in Special Needs provision and at each stage children are set targets to achieve within a time frame, which means they are being monitored and supported in more depth:

Stage 1 – Child monitored and supported within the classroom

Stage 2 – Child may be withdrawn for additional teaching or receive more support in class through team teaching

Stage 3 – School will access support from external agencies

Stage 4 – Application for a Statement of Special Needs

Stage 5 – Child holds a Statement of Special Needs

**Placement on the Learning Support Register**

Children may be placed on the Learning Support Register for a variety of reasons, when a concern arises regarding their progress following differentiated learning opportunities. These concerns may include:

* Little or no progress evident even when area of weakness has been targeted
* Difficulty in developing literacy or numeracy skills, resulting in poor attainment
* Communication and/or interaction difficulties which continue to persist despite the provision of a differentiated curriculum
* Persistent behavioural or emotional difficulties which are not alleviated by behaviour management techniques employed by the school
* Has physical or sensory problems and continues to make little or no progress despite the provision of specialist equipment
* Frequent absences
* Child significantly ahead of their peer group
* Difficulties at home

The class teacher is normally the person who highlights a child as having a particular difficulty within their class and this will be supported by evidence on progress and attainment. The parent may also inform the school of a particular need or concern, arising from medical or other professional evidence. The stage at which the child is placed on the register is dependent upon the level of support needed.

**Homework**

It is school policy to ensure that regular homework is part and parcel of the learning routine. Homework may not always be of the written variety, as in keeping with the Revised Curriculum it could take the form of, for example, a challenge of making or creating; an interview or a piece of research. Generally homework will be given at the beginning of the week and returned to school on Friday. Parents will be contacted if pupils fail to complete their homework or bring their reading books to school.

**Promoting Positive Behaviour**

We recognise the importance of a positive approach to children’s in our school. We consider the best way to encourage good standards of behaviour is by establishing a clear and consistent code of conduct backed by a combination of rewards and sanctions. Our code of conduct is based on six ‘Golden Rules’:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **We are gentle…** we don’t hurt others  | **We are honest.** We don’t cover up the truth  |
| **We are kind and helpful..** We don’t hurt anybody’s feelings  | **We work hard.** We don’t waste our own or others time  |
| **We listen..** We don’t interrupt  | **We look after property.** We don’t waste or damage things  |

**Beyond the Curriculum**

**School Trips**

School trips form an important part of the educational experience in Darkley P.S. Each class will have an end of year trip. Other Educational visits may take place throughout the year and parents will be notified when necessary.

As with all school outings you will be asked to return a consent form to the school before children embark on any school trips.

**Extra Curricular Activities**

We provide an extensive range of extra curricular and out-of-school-hours activities so that the children in Darkley are exposed to as many learning experiences as possible.

We are currently involved with the Extended Schools Programme that will allow children to explore a vast range of activities. We are also involved with the Shared Education Programme allowing the staff and children to collaborate in specific learning programmes with another school.

**Attendance, Punctuality & Absences**

**Classes begin at 9.15 a.m.** Children should not arrive at school before 9.00 a.m. as there will be no supervision. Registration opens at 9.15am. Children arriving after this time with no proper reason will be marked late. The E.A’s Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) monitors absenteeism and so we ask you to send a note on your child's return to school explaining their absence. If a child is to leave school early then please inform the school office. The child must be collected by a parent/guardian. **No child will be allowed to leave school early by themselves. As stipulated by the Education Authority children are not permitted to go on holiday during term time.**

**Lost Property and Responsibility**

The school encourages children to be responsible for their own belongings and does not take responsibility for loss. Parents are urged to label all belongings and encourage their child to be responsible. All lost property is kept in school. At the end of each year items not redeemed are recycled.

**Communication & Parental Partnership**

P1/2/3 (Foundation) use a phone App called Class DoJo to communicate with parents which is very quick, easy to use and practical in communicating with teachers and parents.

The school website www.darkleyprimaryschool.co.uk, will keep you up to date with all events taking place in the school along with lots of other information. A Parent’s Information board in the school entrance porch displays notices of interest. Should you require any other information or documents, please do ask at the school office. The school also has a **texting service** to inform parents of current events. It is important that you inform the school throughout the year if there is any change to your contact details.

From time to time things can and do go wrong. However we operate an open door policy in school. The first person to approach is your child’s teacher, ask in the school office to arrange a time for a quick word as soon as possible. Do not let the issue fester. A timely and quiet word often brings about a quick resolution. If an issue or concern continues or is particularly serious, please arrange to speak with the Principal. He will try to resolve your concern as quickly as possible. Some complaints do take longer to solve but we shall work in partnership with you and, follow the correct procedures to ensure the issue is resolved.

**School Dinners**

Again, in accordance with Department of Education Guidelines, Darkley School Meals staff promote healthy eating in the options and variety of foods served in the canteen.

Every family is issued with a menu at the beginning of each month. This details the variety of meals available. (Menus will also be on our website)The two course meal served daily costs **£2.60** per child. (Sept 2019) There may be a slight increase for 2020. We are awaiting guidance from EA Meals.

School meals are paid for at the end of each week. Please send the

money to school in an **envelope** clearly marked with the child’s name,

number of days that dinner has been received and the amount enclosed. Dinner bills can build up quickly, therefore, it is your responsibility to ensure they are settled weekly. We would encourage all children to have their school dinner.

**Accidents & Sickness**

In the unfortunate event of a child being sick or injured, the school will try to contact the parents to inform them. If we are unable to contact you and we deem your child needs medical attention, we will contact your child’s doctor or call an ambulance. In all cases, it will be the policy of the school to act in the interests of the child.

Please make sure that **any** changes to contact numbers, including mobile numbers are **always** given to the secretary.

**Medical Needs**

Please do keep the school informed of any changes in your child’s medical needs. If your child is asthmatic and needs to use an inhaler

regularly, it is advisable that one is kept in his/her school bag. Inhalers should be clearly labelled with your child’s name and stored in a re-sealable bag. Your child is responsible for administering their own dosage. They will be supervised by a member of staff. And at all times will follow DE policy for the ‘Administration of Medication in School’.

**Head lice**

In line with current School Medical Service guidelines parental advisory notes are no longer issued to schools when an outbreak of Head lice has occurred. We do however from time to time issue Good Practice guidance leaflets to Parents to remind you to check your children’s heads regularly.

In the unfortunate event that lice are found, please do not send your child to school until the lice have been treated with recommended lotion or shampoo.

**Healthy Eating at Darkley P.S**

Darkley P.S operates a ‘Healthy Breaks’ policy whereby children are asked to choose the healthier option and bring a piece of fruit or a sandwich. Water or milk is the only liquid permitted as part of the Healthy Breaks scheme that operates in school. In keeping with this policy we would ask you to refrain from sending **coloured juice drinks and sugary cereal bars** into school for lunch or break as research has shown, these high sugar content products have adverse affects on your child/children’s wellbeing, learning and development. Children are encouraged to bring a bottle of water to school.

**Safety & Security at Darkley P.S**

Your child’s safety is of paramount importance to us. To ensure that your child is working in a **safe** and **uninterrupted** learning environment, we must urge that all parents adhere to the following access arrangements.

**During the school day**

* Access by an adult to the school is via the main door only.
* The entrance porch area is the only designated waiting area for visitors, this also includes parents collecting children;
* All visitors including parents **MUST in all instances** report to the Secretary or Principal and not go directly to classrooms;
* Parents and adults are requested not to loiter outside the Secretary’s office, in the playground or during after school activities;
* The car park is not accessible to cars (other than staff) during the school day. This includes home time and during school based events.
* Please use the pedestrian gate.

**Responsible Internet Use**

In Darkley P.S, we ensure the judicious use of ICT to support, enable and develop children’s experiences. We recognise that whilst ICT provides in-valuable opportunities to develop skills for life we are fully aware that we must all be vigilant and support our pupils to stay safe.

**Going Home Safely**

Children should follow the same home time routine each day. If there are **any** changes in this routine, please inform the teacher via a written note that morning, (if applicable inform the bus driver as well). Children who walk home (P3-P7) should also be reminded of the importance of using the footpath and ensure they go directly home after school.

The same high standards of behaviour in school are expected on the bus to and from school. We take pride in the fact that we are continuously complimented on how respectful and responsible the children are from Darkley P.S. If there is any unusual delay in your child arriving home, do not hesitate to contact the school immediately.

A DOE Road Safety Officer works closely with the younger children to ensure a through and detailed Road and Pedestrian Safety Programme is carried out in class.

**Pastoral Care Policy**

In Darkley P.S, we have a responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of all our pupils. In our school we respect each and every individual child and aim to provide a warm and caring environment so that each individual feels safe, secure and valued. We encourage ALL children to do their best. We strive to ensure that each individual achieves his/her potential academically, socially, physically, emotionally and spiritually. Our Pastoral Care is permeated throughout all aspects of school life and is based up-on the strong Christian Ethos which prevails. Mutual respect, tolerance and forgiveness are the values that we promote.

**Positive Behaviour/Discipline Policy**

At Darkley P.S we take great pride in our excellent behaviour. Our positive behaviour is based on the principle of having respect for ourselves and others; treating others and their property the way we would like ourselves to be treated. We firmly believe everyone should be treated fairly. Any mistakes/misdemeanours made, can be learnt from. It is our intention that you fully support the school behaviour policy. An agreed code of conduct exists with and between all members of community whereby we expect our school community to act in a positive and caring way towards each other.

**Child Protection Policy**

In accordance with the guidance and requirements of DENI there is a Child Protection Policy for Darkley P.S. This policy aims to promote and protect the welfare of our pupils and is known by everyone who works in the school. A parent who has concerns about their child's safety should contact the Designated Teacher for Child Protection. The Child Protection Policy and Anti-bullying Policy are available on request.

**Implementation of Child Protection Procedures**

If a child makes a disclosure, or a member of staff has concerns about a child, **that person must act promptly.** These **must** be reported to the Designated Teacher. If there are concerns that a child may be at risk, **the school is obliged to make a referral.**

Mrs Maeve Mc Kernan may seek clarification or advice from EA Southern Region Child Protection Officer before a referral is made. No decision with regards to a referral is made without careful consideration and appropriate advice.

If you are concerned about your own or another child’s welfare you can at all times speak with:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| The Designated Teacher for Child Protection is  | Deputy Designated teacher for Child Protection is  |
| **Mrs Maeve Mc Kernan**  | **Mrs Collette Conlon**  |

Or **Mr Monaghan** (Principal & Safeguarding Team)