

School Induction Booklet

This document is available in other languages. Please contact your school if you require this document in a different language

This document has been developed through funding from
Galway City Partnership

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Useful Information and Contacts

- Galway Migrant Service -is a dedicated support service for migrants and their families in Galway city to promote their rights through information, support and advocacy. - 091-533033
- Knocknacarra Youth Development Project - 091 580900
- Ballinfoile Area Youth Project - 091 760284
- Ballybane Youth Development Project - 091 768297
- SPARK - Youth Work Ireland – Galway - 091 561637
- Youth Work Ireland – Galway, Westside - 091 528553
- Family Support Services - Ballybane - 091 773663
- Ballinfoile - 091 760330
- Westside - 091 585011
- Galway Youth Information Centre - 091 562434
- Galway Citizens Information Centre - 091 563344
- City of Galway VEC - 091-549400
- FAS Placement Service - 091-534400

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*The booklet is for information purposes only and all details should be confirmed with the relevant school or authority. Information for this booklet has been gathered through documentation and information from the following sources: Department of Education, Jesuit Refugee Service – Ireland, National Education Welfare Board and other statutory/ local agencies.*

## Overview of Galway City Partnership

Galway City Partnership is a local development company which implements a wide range of social inclusion measures. The target groups of Galway City Partnership are as follows:

- Long Term Unemployed - Travellers
- Disadvantaged Women - People with Disabilities
- Young People at Risk - The Homeless
- Lone Parents -Ethnic Minorities
- Older People - Ex-Prisoners and Offenders
- Substance Misusers - The Underemployed
- Migrant Workers - Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Communities

Services provided by Galway City Partnership are as follows:

- Youth Advocacy Service - 091-773466
- EdStart – The Incredible Years Galway - 091-773466
- Enterprise Service - 091-773466
- Local Employment Service Network
  - Ballybane - 091 768304
  - Westside - 091 581955
  - Bohermore - 091 566617
  - Galway People Resource Centre - 091 565311

Contact Details for Galway City Partnership are as follows:

3 The Plaza Offices, Headford Road, Galway City

Tel: 091-773466 Fax: 091-773468

E-mail: [info@gcp.ie](mailto:info@gcp.ie) Website: [www.gcp.ie](http://www.gcp.ie)

## Introduction

This booklet provides information for parents and guardians about Irish schools. A good knowledge of education in Ireland will help you to take an active interest in ensuring that your child is happy at school.

General Questions

### *Who is responsible for the formal education of children in Ireland?*

The Department of Education and Science is responsible for the education of children in Ireland. Information about this department can be found on their website: [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie).

### *Does my son/daughter have to attend school?*

Yes. Most children in Ireland can attend primary and secondary school for free. If your child is aged between 6 and 16 he/she must attend school by law. Your child must attend school everyday unless there is a good reason for him/her to miss school. Attending school will help your child to develop skills, make friends and build up confidence.

### *How do I enrol my son/daughter in school?*

You should telephone the principal of the school and arrange to meet with him/her. You can ask the school principal to enroll your son/daughter at this meeting. If a school is full it may not be able to enrol your son/daughter and the principal will suggest another school nearby. A list of schools can be found on the Department of Education's website, [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie).

**Attendance**

***What should I do if my child has to miss school?***

You must tell the school that your child cannot attend and say why. There will often be a good reason for your child to miss school and the school will take this into account. You should not send your child to school if he/she is sick.

***What happens if my child misses a lot of school?***

If your child misses more than 20 days in the school year the school will tell the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB). The NEWB may send an educational welfare officer to you to help you make sure your child attends school more often.

***What is the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB)?***

The National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) supports families and makes sure that every child receives an education as required by law. For most children this means attending school. The NEWB can help you to find a school for your child if you are not able to. You can contact the NEWB [www.newb.ie](http://www.newb.ie).

***What if I leave the area and move away from the school?***

You should tell the principal that your son/daughter is moving to a new place and will be attending a different school. You should ask the principal to give you a written report about your child, including his/her language progress. When you enrol your son/ daughter in a new school you should give this information to the new principal. If the school has given you books or other things you should return these to the school before you leave.

**Information about your Secondary School**

- The name of our school is .....
- The address of our school is .....
- The name of the Principal is .....
- Our Telephone Number is .....
- Classes start at .....am and finish at .....pm
- The school is closed on the following dates:
  - .....to .....
  - .....to .....
  - .....to .....
  - .....to .....

| <b>Subject</b>        | <b>Available</b> | <b>Subject</b>       | <b>Available</b> |
|-----------------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| English               |                  | Physical Education   |                  |
| Irish                 |                  | Home Economics       |                  |
| Maths                 |                  | Chemistry            |                  |
| French                |                  | Physics              |                  |
| Geography             |                  | Biology              |                  |
| History               |                  | Engineering          |                  |
| German                |                  | Construction Studies |                  |
| Mechanical<br>Drawing |                  | Art Craft & Design   |                  |
| Technical Drawing     |                  | Business Studies     |                  |
| Economics             |                  |                      |                  |

**Information about your Primary School**

- The name of our school is .....
- The address of our school is .....
- The name of the Principal is .....
- Please contact .....if you have any queries
- Our Telephone Number is .....
- Classes start at .....am and finish at .....pm
- The contact number of our Home School Community Liaison Teachers is: .....
- The school is closed on the following dates:
  - ..... to .....
  - ..... to .....
  - .....to .....
  - ..... to .....

**Communicating with the School**

*My English is not very good. How can I communicate with the school?*

You can bring a friend who speaks English with you to the school to help when you are meeting the school principal or teacher. Some schools can provide an interpreter for meetings. You can ask the school if they can organise an interpreter for your meeting.

*How will the school contact me if they want to see me?*

Schools usually give notes or newsletters for parents to the children. You should check your child’s school bag regularly for these in case your child forgets to give the note to you.

*What does the Home School Community Liaison Officer do?*

The Home School Community Liaison scheme was set up to help pupils to do well in school. The Home School Community Liaison Officer works with parents/guardians to help them to become involved in their child’s learning.

**Bullying**

*I am worried that my child is being bullied.*

Bullying sometimes happens in school or on the way to school. This is a serious matter and it is not acceptable in Irish schools. Bullying is defined as repeated verbal, psychological or physical aggression carried out by an individual or group against others.

Signs that your child is being bullied may include:

- Worry about travelling to school, asking parents to drive them to school, changing their travel route
- Not wanting to go to school or refusing to go to school
- Loss of concentration, not doing well at school
- Complaints of illness, headaches, stomach aches
- Changes in mood or behaviour
- Visible signs of anxiety or stress, crying, difficulty sleeping, not eating
- His/her belongings may be missing or damaged
- Unexplained bruising or cuts
- Refusal to say what is troubling him/her

These signs do not mean that your child is certainly being bullied.

### ***My child is being bullied. What should I do?***

You should talk to your child's teacher about this. If your child tells you he/she is being bullied:

- Stay calm, explain to the child that he/she is not at fault and that this is a problem which can be solved
- Talk to the teacher as teachers need the support of parents in tackling this problem.
- Children sometimes need help to socialise. You can help your child to socialise by inviting children to play.
- Tell your child that sometimes it is better to give away money or belongings and get away and tell.
- Some children are bullied because of poor personal hygiene or habits. If this is the case you can help your child to overcome this.

In previous years students have taken examinations in Latvian, Lithuanian, Romanian, Modern Greek, Finnish, Polish, Estonian, Slovakian, Swedish, Czech, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Portuguese, Danish and Dutch. If your child would like to take an examination in his/her mother tongue you can talk to the school principal about this. You can get more information about non-curricular languages on [www.examinations.ie](http://www.examinations.ie)

### **School Uniform**

#### ***Does my child have to wear a school uniform?***

Many schools require that pupils wear a uniform. Sometimes students need special clothes or shoes for sport. If you have a problem with your son/daughter wearing the school uniform for cultural reasons you should discuss this with the school principal.

### **Homework**

#### ***Will my son/daughter have to do homework?***

Students at Post-Primary level are usually given homework by their teachers. Homework takes about 2-3 hours for students in post-primary school. You should make a place for your son/ daughter to do homework away from noise and distractions.

choose the LCVP must take some subjects from the traditional Leaving Certificate as well as these modules. Universities, Institutes of Technology and Colleges of Education recognize the LCVP for entry into third level courses.

#### ***What is the Leaving Certificate Applied?***

The Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) is designed to meet the needs of students who do not wish to take either the traditional Leaving Certificate or the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme. The main aim of the LCA is to prepare students for adult and working life. This examination is not recognized for entry into third level courses in Universities, Institutes of Technology or Colleges of Education. Students who take the LCA can continue their education by taking Post-Leaving Certificate Courses.

### **Languages**

#### ***Can my child take his/her mother tongue language as an examination in the Leaving Certificate?***

Some EU languages which are not part of the normal school curriculum can be studied as a Leaving Certificate subject. To do this, a student must:

- Be from a member state of the European Union
- Speak the language as their mother tongue
- Be studying for the Leaving Certificate
- Be studying Leaving Certificate English

### **Discipline**

#### ***What happens if my child breaks the school rules?***

Corporal or physical punishment is not used in Irish schools. It is illegal. Each school has its own rules. You will be given the rules when your child begins school. You should make sure that your child understands the school rules. Schools usually have strict rules about wearing the school uniform, wearing jewellery, attendance, punctuality and behaviour. If your child continually breaks the school rules the teacher or principal will discuss this with you and you will be expected to make sure that your child's behaviour improves. If your child breaks the school rules very seriously, he/she can be suspended from school. This is a rare decision. If this happens and you do not agree with the school's decision to suspend your child, you can appeal to the Board of Management and as a last resort to the Department of Education and Science. Schools are required to have a code of behavior policy.

### **Boards of Management**

#### ***What is the Board of Management?***

The Board of Management is responsible for the direct governance of the school. Representatives of parents, teachers, trustees, the patron, the principal and the community make up the Board of Management. If you would like to get involved in the Board of Management you can talk to the school principal.

## **Parents/Guardians**

### ***How can I help my child do well in school?***

It is important that you show interest in what your child is learning at school and give your child praise when he/she works hard or does well. You can help your child by providing space for homework, by building up his/her self-esteem, by attending meetings and school events and by becoming involved in your school.

### ***How can I get involved in my child's school?***

Most schools have a parents' council and all parents are invited to become involved with this. You can ask the school principal or teacher how you can become involved. Schools may also need volunteers to help organise school events, such as plays, concerts and summer camps. If you would like to help your child's school in this way you should ask the principal or teacher how you can help.

### ***I'm afraid my child will forget his/her English over the school holidays. What should I do?***

It is important that children and young people use, read or listen to some English every day. For example, your child could watch a television programme and then tell you about it, or he/ she could read a book or speak English with friends. However, it is also important that your child does not forget the mother tongue of your family. It is a good idea to use your mother tongue at home and to talk about the customs and way of life of your native country when you can

### ***What do students study during Transition Year?***

Areas of study include:

– Communication, Guidance and counseling, Maths, Physical education, Personal and social development, Aesthetic and cultural studies, Science and technologies, Business studies and enterprise education.

Teachers in each school design the Transition Year programme and students have the opportunity to try a range of subjects. This helps students to make a more informed choice about the Leaving Certificate subjects they would like to study after Transition Year.

## **Leaving Certificate**

### ***What is the traditional Leaving Certificate?***

This is the last examination taken in post-primary education and is usually taken when students are 17, 18 or 19 years of age. The Leaving Certificate is similar to A levels or the Baccalaureate. The Leaving Certificate is the main basis upon which places in universities, institutes of technology and colleges of education are allocated.

### ***What is the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme?***

The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) is a version of the traditional Leaving Certificate. The LCVP focuses on technical subjects and adds some modules with a vocational focus. These extra modules are: Enterprise Education, Preparation for Work and Work Experience. Students who Parents/Guardians

***I think the Junior Certificate will be too difficult for my child. What should I do?***

Some schools offer an alternative to the Junior Certificate called the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP). This is designed for students who may be at risk of leaving school early. You can ask your principal about the JCSP.

### **Senior Cycle**

***What is the Senior Cycle?***

The Senior Cycle is for students from 15 to 18 years of age. The Senior Cycle takes 2 or 3 years, depending on whether the student takes Transition Year. During the final two years of Senior Cycle students take one of three programmes, each leading to a state examination. These programmes are the traditional Leaving Certificate, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) offers students an opportunity to take part in independent learning; to develop general, technical and academic skills and to develop without the pressure of an examination.

***What is Transition Year?***

Transition Year is a programme which is taken in some schools after the Junior Certificate and before the Leaving Certificate. Transition Year allows students to experience different educational programmes, including work experience. There is no formal examination at the end of the year. Transition Year offers students an opportunity to take part in independent learning; to develop general, technical and academic skills and to develop without the pressure of an examination.

### **Special Needs**

***My child has learning difficulties. What school will he/she attend?***

Children with special educational needs are usually educated in mainstream schools but if this is not suitable, there are a number of options for students with learning difficulties or a disability. Your child can be enrolled in:

- A mainstream school with extra support from the Department of Education and Science, for example a Special Needs Assistant
- A separate, special class in a mainstream school
- A special school which caters for the student's disability, for example a special school for children who are visually or hearing impaired.

***My child has special educational needs. How can the school manage his/her extra needs?***

Your school can get extra teaching resources for pupils with more serious learning difficulties, for example, a Special Needs Assistant or extra teaching support. You can talk about your child's extra needs with the school principal.

***What is a special needs assistant?***

A Special Needs Assistant helps students who have serious learning, physical or behavioural difficulties. For example, the Special Needs Assistant can help children with getting on and off the school bus and can help with writing, feeding, clothing and general hygiene.

***What is the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)?***

The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) is a service funded by the Department of Education and Science. The service provides psychologists who specialise in working with primary and secondary schools. The NEPS works with teachers, parents and children to identify educational needs and to help children who may have problems with learning, behaviour or motivation. You must give your consent for a psychologist to meet with your child. The NEPS psychologist can make suggestions about how to help your child if he/she is having serious difficulties in school. Not all schools have this service.

**Finances**

***Where can I get financial help with sending my child to school?***

If your income is below a certain level, if you are receiving a social welfare payment or if you are taking part in certain training schemes, you may be entitled to help with the cost of sending your child to school. You may be eligible for the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance to help with the cost of school uniforms. You should ask the Community Welfare Officer about this payment. You may also be entitled to get financial help with buying school books under the School Book Grant Scheme. You should apply to the school principal for help with the cost of school books.

***My son/daughter has very little English. What class will he/ she be placed in?***

Young people learn English very quickly so the school will usually put your son/daughter into a class with other young people who are the same age. The school may decide not to place your son/daughter in an examination year at first, as this could be stressful for the student. Transition Year can be a good opportunity for your son/daughter to improve their English without the pressure of having state examinations. The Department of Education and Science provides additional resources for students in primary and post primary schools who do not speak English. If your son/daughter needs help with learning English, the school will provide additional English classes for him/her during the school day.

**Junior Cycle**

***What is the Junior Cycle?***

This is a 3-year programme which students usually begin at age 12 to 13, when they have finished Primary School. Students take a state examination called the Junior Certificate after 3 years. There are over 20 subjects in the Junior Cycle. The most popular subjects are English, Mathematics, Irish, Science, Geography, History, French, Business Studies, Art/Craft/Design and Home Economics. Not all schools offer the same subjects. Students study 8, 9 or 10 subjects. Subjects can be studied at Higher or Ordinary Level. English, Irish and Mathematics can also be studied at Foundation Level.

***How are students taught in post-primary school?***

Students are taught by a number of different teachers at Post- Primary level. Each teacher usually specialises in one or two subjects. Students are encouraged to enjoy their time in school.

***Can you tell me about the school day?***

Most post-primary schools are open from Monday to Friday. You should check what time the school opens and closes at with the principal. There may be sports or activities arranged after school hours. There is a mid-morning break and lunch break during the school day. You should make sure that your son/daughter has food and drink for these two breaks.

***What if the school closes during the year?***

The school will give you a list of days when the school will be closed during the year. If there are other days when the school will close the school will give your son/daughter a note to inform you.

***What is the staffing structure within a school?***

The principal, who may be male or female, is responsible for running the school. A student may have 7 or 8 different teachers. Each class usually has a year head teacher to look after the non-academic needs of the students.

***Do parents meet with teachers?***

The school usually organises a parent–teacher meeting during the year. At this meeting you can talk about your child’s progress with the teachers. If you want to talk to the teacher or principal at another time during the year you should contact the school to arrange a meeting.

**Primary School**

***Are there different types of primary school?***

Yes. Some schools teach boys and girls together, while single sex schools teach boys and girls separately. Most primary schools in Ireland teach boys and girls together. All primary schools are based on a religious ethos, for example, Roman Catholic, Church of Ireland, Muslim, Jewish or multi-denominational. Most primary schools in Ireland are based on a Roman Catholic ethos. Even if your child is not Roman Catholic, he/she can still attend a Roman Catholic school.

The Educate Together Schools have a multi-denominational ethos. This means that children of all social, religious and cultural backgrounds have equal access to the school, and that the school board is not permitted to promote any particular faith. For more information on Educate Together schools you can visit [www.educatetogether.ie](http://www.educatetogether.ie). Most schools teach the curriculum through English, but some schools, called Gaelscoileanna, teach the curriculum through Irish. You can send your child to a Gaelscoil even if you do not speak any Irish. For more information about Gaelscoileanna you can visit [www.gaelscoileanna.ie](http://www.gaelscoileanna.ie).

***When should my child start primary school?***

Children do not have to start school until the age of 6 but most children start school in the September after their 4th birthday. Some children wait until they are 5 years old.

***I can't find a school that will enrol my child. What should I do?***

You can also contact the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB). If you contact the NEWB you will need to give them copies of the letters from schools you have tried to enrol your child in. The best thing to do is to contact schools as early as possible to enrol your child. It is your responsibility to enrol your child in a school.

***I think that my child is being discriminated against because he/she is not Catholic or not Irish. What should I do?***

If a school refuses to enrol your child, you should receive a letter describing this decision in writing. This letter should include the reasons why the school would not enrol your child. You can appeal against a decision to refuse to enrol your child in a school. There is a shortage of school places in some areas, and the school you apply to may not have room for your child. When there is a shortage of space, some schools will give places to children based on their religion, so for example, a Muslim school may give first preference to Muslim children, a Roman Catholic school may give first preference to Roman Catholic children etc. Schools are allowed to do this, but most schools will do their best to accommodate you and your child. Sometimes a place will open up for your child in September. You can contact the National Educational Welfare Board if you are unhappy with a school's decision not to enrol your child.

**Streaming of students** – if the school streams students this means students are divided into different classes on the basis of their ability. You can ask the school principal what the school's policy on streaming of students is.

**Facilities** – for example, you can ask whether the school has a library and facilities for physical education and recreation.

**Extra curricular activities** – you can ask if the school offers any activities outside of lessons, for example, sports, choir, dance etc.

**Student involvement** – you can ask whether the students can get involved in decisions which will affect them. Some schools have a student council which allows students to be involved in the life of the school.

**Parental involvement** – you can ask if parents are represented on the Board of Management. You can also ask if there is a parents' council to allow parents become more involved in the school.

**Post-Primary Education**

***Can you explain post-primary education to me?***

Post-primary education consists of five years in total. A 3-year Junior Cycle followed by a 2 or 3 year Senior Cycle. There are 3 terms in each school year: – September to mid-December

– January to mid-March/April (Easter)

– After Easter to the end of May or early June.

In the middle of each term is a short holiday called a mid-term break.

## **Post-Primary School or Second Level Education**

### ***What is post-primary education?***

Students aged between 12 and 18 are educated in the post-primary education sector. Attendance at post-primary school is compulsory for students under 16.

## **Choosing a School**

### ***Are there different types of post-primary school?***

Yes, there are 5 types of post-primary school in Ireland. These are secondary schools, vocational schools, community schools, comprehensive schools and community colleges. The main difference between these is how they are managed, who owns them and how they are funded. Secondary schools, community schools and comprehensive schools are generally denominational schools, meaning that they are based on a particular religion, for example Roman Catholic or Church of Ireland. Vocational Schools and Community Colleges are non-denominational, meaning that they are not based on any religion.

### ***What should I consider when choosing a post-primary school?***

**The curriculum** – this is the range of subjects which the school offers. Not all schools offer the same subjects, so if your son/ daughter would like to study a particular subject you should make sure he/she will be able to do so in the school that you choose.

**The programmes** – some schools, not all, offer extra programmes such as the Junior Certificate School Programme, Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) or Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP).

## **Education**

### ***Can you explain primary education to me?***

There are 8 classes in primary education. Children usually spend 1 year in each class.

### **Age Year Class name**

4-5 years 1 Junior Infants

5-6 years 2 Senior Infants

6-7 years 3 First Class

7-8 years 4 Second Class

8-9 years 5 Third Class

9-10 years 6 Fourth Class

10-11 years 7 Fifth Class

11-12 years 8 Sixth Class

The primary school year has 3 terms.

The first term is from September to mid-December. (Christmas)

The second term is from January to mid-March/April (Easter).

The third term is from after Easter to the end of June. (Summer)

### ***My child has very little English. What class will he/she be placed in?***

Children learn English very quickly so the school will usually put your child into a class with other children who are the same age. The Department of Education and Science provides additional resources for students in primary and post primary schools who do not speak English. If your child needs help with learning English, the school will provide additional English classes for him/her during the school day.

***What will my child learn in primary school?***

The primary school curriculum is designed to be a fun and interesting experience for your child. It is divided into the following areas:

- Language (English and Irish), Mathematics, Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (e.g., History and Geography), Arts Education (including visual arts, music and drama), Physical Education and Social, Personal and Health Education.
- Children will also be offered classes in Religious Education. Your child does not have to study Religious Education if you don't want him/her to, but he/she may have to stay in the classroom under the supervision of the teacher.

***Will my child have to do homework?***

Some primary school teachers give homework to children and some do not. If your school gives homework you should give your child space and encouragement to do his/her homework.

***Can you tell me about the school day?***

The school day lasts for 5 hours and 40 minutes. The school day can be shorter for younger children. Schools are open from Monday to Friday. There is normally a mid-morning break and a lunch break. You should make sure that your child has food and drink for these two breaks. It is important to bring your child to school on time, and to collect him/her on time at the end of the school day.

***What if the school closes during the year?***

The school will give you a list of days when the school will be closed during the year. If there are any other days when the school will close the teacher will give your child a note. You should look in your child's schoolbag every day for such notes.

***Do parents meet with the teachers?***

The school usually organises a parent-teacher meeting during the year. At this meeting you can see examples of your child's work and talk about your child's progress with the teacher. If you want to talk to the teacher or principal at another time during the year you should contact the school to arrange a meeting.

***Will my child have to wear a school uniform?***

Children in many schools have to wear a school uniform. Sometimes children need special clothes or shoes for sport. If you have a problem with your child wearing the school uniform for cultural reasons you should discuss this with the school principal.

**Health**

***Will a doctor or nurse examine my child when he/ she is in primary school?***

A school health screening and school immunisation programme is available for children attending state primary schools. You will be told about the screening and you can be present for the screening if you prefer. Any health problems identified at the screenings are treated free of charge. Vaccinations are provided free of charge to all children. Your child will be visited by the dentist in primary school and if any treatment is necessary your child will be referred to the local dentist.