

# Welcome to our School

Dear Parents/Guardians,

On behalf of the Board of Management and Staff, I would like to welcome you and your child to our school.

I am delighted that you have chosen Griffeen Valley Educate Together National School for your child.

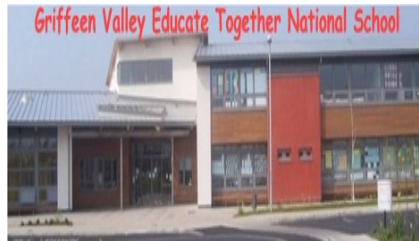
This is a wonderful time in the development of our school. We have recently opened a new extension to Griffeen Valley School. 8 new classes, additional special needs facilities, a new library and a new computer room and an amazing P.E. hall. The school is thrilled to be able to offer these facilities for our young scholars and we look forward to seeing them grow and learn in a happy environment.

I hope that the information provided in this booklet will give a flavour of the core values of our school.

If you require any additional detail in relation to any of the matters referred to, or about other aspects of school life, please contact the school.

Best Wishes

Thérèse Gamble  
Principal



# School Personnel

Our School Management Team is:

**Principal:** Thérèse Gamble

**Deputy Principal:** Andrea Burke-Khan

**Assistant Principal:** John Paul O'Keeffe

## The History of our School

**December 2001** A small group of parents met at the existing Educate Together School in Bewley Way (LETS) to see if it would be possible to establish a 2<sup>nd</sup> Educate Together School in the Lucan area.

**January 2002** Work began in earnest and on January 12<sup>th</sup> a pre-enrolment day was held and more than 130 children were registered. The enrolment policy of our patron, Educate Together, was adopted. The information gathered was sent to the Department of Education and Science (DES) to apply for permission to open a school.

**March 2002** As the months progressed, we continued to have applications from parents for their little scholars and the list of prospective pupils grew and grew. The group met weekly and carried out various tasks including applying for planning permission for the school site and negotiating with the builder regarding the possibilities of its acquisition. During this month we held a parents' information evening where we gave details on the progress. A fundraising committee was also established at this meeting.

**April 2002** The following months were most eventful. The fundraising committee held various events and raised in excess of €5,000.

Our planning application came through. However, as the Department of Education and Science was unable to acquire the site in Griffeen Valley it was decided to open in a small way in the Scouts' Den in Lucan Village rather than wait until the following year to open on the new site. Due to lack of space available we were only able to offer **24 Junior Infant places**.

**September 2003** Our school moved from the Scouts' Den into new temporary premises - the prefabricated building on the grounds of LETS, Bewley Way, Lucan.

**December 2003** The Department of Education and Science sanctioned our new school and the site in Griffeen Valley was approved.

**March 2004** Work on the new school site began. A small group of children, staff and parents went down to the new site and OJ Onolememen was the lucky child chosen to 'turn the sod'.

**September 2004** We finally moved into our new school building in Griffeen Glen Boulevard. Hurrah. Our student numbers increased to 241! We were able to offer places from Junior Infants up to and including Third Class.

The Griffeen Valley school community will always be grateful to the parents of the children in the first two years of the school for their unflinching determination to fight for the lovely school that has been created in Griffeen Valley.

**September 2008** Staff numbers and pupil numbers continue to grow and grow. It is worth noting that our cohort of children in this year came from forty-eight different national backgrounds, spoke over forty languages in their homes and were affiliated to more than fifteen religious groups/churches.

**June 2010** This is a historic year for our school. The first group of children, who started with the school in 2002, come to the end of their primary schooling. We wished them well and have no doubt but that they will be fine representatives of both themselves and our school.

**2011 – 2012** marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the existence of Griffeen Valley Educate Together School. We have come such a long way from the Spartan surroundings of the Scouts Den in 2002, to our state-of-the-art, high tech school in Griffeen. So many people deserve so much thanks for their considerable efforts to make our school the lovely place it is – we look forward to acknowledging those individuals during our tenth anniversary year. As for the future – we have lots of lots of plans!!

**June 2012** As our 10<sup>th</sup> birthday comes to an end, we look forward to new and exciting developments in the future. The Department of Education has asked the Board of Management to facilitate the building of an extension which would add considerably to our facilities.

**On March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2015**, Griffeen Valley School got the keys of its new extension. By April 1<sup>st</sup>, our 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes had taken up residence, with our Learning Support Team following closely behind. In September, 2015, our two 4<sup>th</sup> classes followed them to the new building. The school will also take in a third Junior Infant class in September 2015 and, year by year, begin the process of filling the additional space provided by the new building.

## **The Board of Management**

Our Board of Management consists of eight members.

Our patron body, Educate Together, nominates two members, The Chairperson and a Patron's Nominee.

Two parent representatives, one mother and one father, are elected to the Board of Management from the parent body.

The teachers elect from their ranks a teacher representative for the Board of Management.

As principal, Thérèse is also a member of the Board of Management.

The remaining two members are chosen by the other six members from the community





# **Educate Together**

## **Your Questions Answered**

### **What is Educate Together?**

Educate Together is the national association of the Educate Together schools in the Republic of Ireland.

There are currently 81 schools in the Republic, and this figure is growing.

Educate Together schools are set up and developed by groups of parents in a local area who wish to send their children to a national school that is multi-denominational, child-centred, co-educational and democratically run. The schools are fully recognised by the Department of Education and Science, are non-fee paying and operate under the same rules applying to all national schools.

### **Where does the name ‘Educate Together’ come from?**

‘Educate Together’ was carefully chosen as the name of our national parent organisation to reflect the coming together of children of different faiths and beliefs, from different social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Educate Together schools are multi-denominational, co-educational, child-centred and democratically run. Our schools are open to all, on a “first come, first served basis”.

### **How are Educate Together schools different?**

An Educate Together school serves the needs of the entire community and caters for all religions and none. The ethos of an Educate Together school is inclusive, encouraging respect for diversity.

## **Why are all Educate Together schools co-educational?**

Educate Together is committed to encouraging all children to explore their full range of abilities and opportunities, and to developing active programmes to counter gender-stereotyping and inequity in all aspects of school life.

## **What does ‘child-centred’ mean?**

Child-centred means that the school is committed to creative development of the educational programme through genuine dialogue between teachers and parents for the common good of all children attending the school. While covering the curriculum as set by the Department of Education and Science, children are encouraged to prepare themselves for a real and active part in the school life, as a preparation for future participation in society.

## **How can parents and guardians get involved?**

Active and focused involvement is a vital element of parents’ and guardians’ contribution to the education of their children. Educate Together schools encourage parents and guardians to become actively involved in the education of their children and in the broader school community. Parents and guardians are encouraged to be involved in Parent-Teacher Associations, and in the development of extra-curricular activities. While endorsing the professional role of the teachers in the school, parents can work with teachers to enhance their children’s learning experiences in class. Our Parental Involvement Policy can be seen on our school website.



## **How are Educate Together schools funded?**

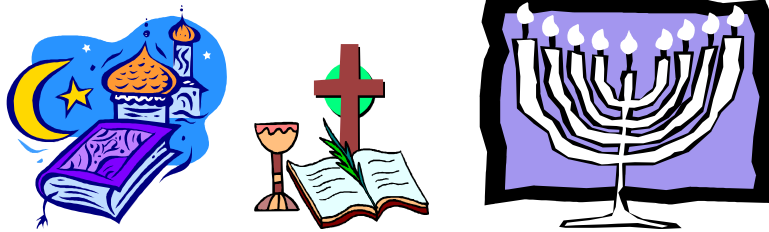
The Department of Education and Science provides an annual grant for each child. This capitation grant is clearly not sufficient to cover the ongoing costs of running a primary school. As with most national schools, Educate Together schools have a fundraising programme and many have a system of voluntary contributions. Without the generous, on-going support of parents for the resourcing of our school, our lovely building would be a relatively empty shell, compared to the well-resourced school it is today.

### **Further Information:**

Educate Together  
Equity House  
16/17 Upper Ormond Quay  
North City  
Dublin 7.  
Ph: 01-4292500  
Fax: 01- 429 2502  
e-mail: <http://www.educatetogether.ie>

## Religion

Our school provides a comprehensive programme of information in relation to the main faith systems and cultures. Educate Together schools also provide religious education programmes based on morality, ethics and good citizenship. This is called the Learn Together Programme.

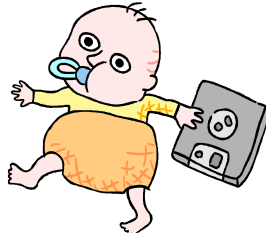


Our school does not prepare children of any denomination for sacraments or religious events, but is committed to making facilities available to parents who wish to organise religious instruction or doctrinal classes outside the school hours.



## Enrolment

Griffeen Valley is now part of a Lucan Common Enrolment System (LCES) Further details in relation to the LCES are available on our website.

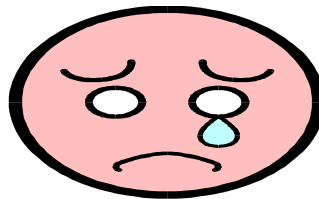


## Punctuality

Your child should be on time for school in the morning so that the class is not disrupted.

It is equally important that you collect your child/ren promptly from school each day.

Children, especially Junior Infants, can become extremely anxious and tearful if they think they have been forgotten.



## Code of Behaviour

Our school's code of behaviour is based on the promotion of our seven Golden Rules.

1. Be on time and be prepared.
2. Do your work as best as you can.
3. Be honest - don't cover up the truth.
4. Be respectful to all staff.
5. Be kind and helpful to other children.
6. Look after your school and your personal property.
7. Do your best and try and make our school a happy and safe place for all.

The children are rewarded for keeping the seven Golden Rules at assembly each Friday.

At this 'school meeting', all of the children are brought to the school hall and join in congratulating those who have made a particular effort over the previous week.

Parents of incoming juniors will be invited to sign a simple document which states that they have read the school's Code of Good Behaviour and that they are happy with its contents.



## **Communication**

It is important for you the parent/guardian, your child and us at Griffeen Valley to have good communication with each other. If you have any queries, problems or concerns regarding your child, please contact your child's teacher and make an appointment to meet him/her.

When making the appointment, please indicate the nature of your concern e.g. class-work, behaviour-related, personal etc. (S)he will arrange a time when they can give you the attention and privacy you may need.

In addition, if there is a change in home circumstances (e.g. illness, separation or anything that you feel may affect your child) it is important to let us know. We assure you of the utmost confidence in all matters.

Please visit our website for up-to-date information in relation to school events and activities.

Please ensure also that you give the school your e-mail address so that we can forward you our school newsletter.

Finally, we operate a text-a-parent system so that we can contact you quickly with any required information.

## **Absence from School**

If your child is unable to attend school we ask that you send an 'Explanation for Absence' form (available from the school office) with your child upon his/her return to school explaining the reason for absence. If your child is likely to be absent for more than two days then we ask that you contact the school. In the event of holidays or hospitalisation, we ask that we be informed of this as soon as possible. If any child is absent from school for *twenty days or more* the school is obliged to pass this information onto the National Education Welfare Board. We will notify you, in writing, if your child has been absent for more than fifteen days. Another letter will be sent to you if your child is absent for twenty days and the authorities will be notified.

We thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

**Data Protection: Please see the school website for copy of our Data Protection Policy.**

# A Typical School Day

8:30 am	School opens and lessons begin promptly
10:15-10:30 am	Lunch break and free play
10:30am	Teaching /learning
12:00-12:25 pm	Lunch break and free play
12:30 pm	Teaching /learning
1:10 pm	Junior and Senior Infants go home
2:10pm	First to Sixth classes go home



## **Fundraising**

Like any school, we have to rely substantially on fundraising activities for our school.

Past fundraising activities have included a pub quiz, raffle, buy-a-brick, sponsored cycle ride, women's mini-marathon.

We urge all parents to support our fund-raising efforts, as this will only benefit the children.

If you have any fundraising ideas, or wish to be involved with the PTA, please call in to the school office and speak to Eithne, our school secretary.

## **Students' Union/Green Schools Committee**

Children in each class annually elect one boy and one girl to the school's Students' Union/Green Schools Committee

They meet regularly and put forward suggestions and recommendations in relation to aspects of school life of particular concern to the school's children.

## Health

The school staff working with your child should always be made aware of any health problem your child may have, such as asthma, allergies, diabetes, epilepsy etc. If your child develops any health problems during their time here at Griffeen Valley School please keep us up-to-date. It is important that we have this information in order to offer your child the best care we can.



## Administration of medicine in school

As a general rule teachers should not be involved in the administration of medicines. However, where a teacher must become involved, the following procedure should be adhered to:-

*The parent /guardian should write to the Board of Management requesting permission for the teacher(s) to administer the medicine, enclosing details of the medication procedure required. This request must be in writing for the school records.*

**NB:** Please note that teachers are not contractually obliged to administer medicine.

The parent/guardian will, in all instances, be required to sign an indemnity form prior to the teacher being authorised by the Board to administer the medication.

**Head Lice** No matter how careful you are with your child's hair there is still a chance that it can become infected with head lice. It is a part of school life! Please check your child's hair regularly. It is of the **utmost importance** that you inform the school immediately if you do find head lice as they are very contagious. We will immediately notify all parents to check their child's hair.



## **Tips for Parents/Guardians**

Your child's first day at school is a very important day in his/her life. It is also a big day for parents/guardians and teachers. Below are some **tips** which we hope will prove useful to you to enable your child's first day at school to be a positive and rewarding experience. You will also find tips on the NCCA website @ [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie).

### **How you can help your child to prepare for his/her first day at school**

Talk to your child about your own time spent at school when you were younger. Be excited as you explain about the opportunity to make new friends and to learn new things.

We have no uniform but would recommend that your child wears comfortable and smart clothing.

Teach your child how to take on/off his/her coat and how to open and close zips, buttons, buckles and laces. Zips are preferable to buttons and elasticised clothing is ideal.

Ensure all your child's belongings are clearly labelled with his/her name and help them to identify their own belongings.

Show your child how to use and finish using the toilet properly and how to wash their hands after using the toilets.

## **Your Child's Lunch**

Choose a lunch box and drink bottle that are both secure but which can be opened easily by your child.

We recommend a healthy lunch be brought to school each day to encourage the healthy growth of your child. The school has a Healthy Eating Policy which you will find on our website.

To help your child, please ensure that all carton drinks have straws, and that a spoon is provided for any yoghurt. If giving your child fruit please peel and segment the fruit if your child is unable to do so for him/her self.



## **Show interest in your child's day**

Show an interest in your child's day and encourage him/her to talk about school. Ask about what new friends they have made, if they had music or drawing during the day? Small questions like these will encourage your child to share their school day with you.



## **Parent Teacher Association**

The PTA in Griffeen Valley ETNS plays a very important role in fundraising, health and safety, and social activities and most importantly, contributing to the life of our schools by voicing the perspective of parents. For more information, please contact the school office.

## **Coffee Mornings**

The PTA organises a coffee morning on the first Wednesday of every month during the school year. Come along and make new friends! It takes place in the hall from 8.30. All coffee mornings will be advertised.

## **Parking**

Parking in the school premises is not allowed. This is purely in the interests of the health and safety of our young scholars. We ask you to be mindful of local residents and please do not block paths/driveways.

## **School Book Club**

This scheme will allow you to pay monthly deposits towards the costs of your children's school books for the next academic year. You can join any time and pay in as much as you wish. The dates for deposits run simultaneous with the coffee mornings. For more information contact please contact the school office.

## **Junior Infant Times**

Please note that for the first two weeks the Junior Infants will start at 8.30 am and finish at 11.30 am. After that they will come in from 8.30 am until 13.10 pm.

## **Pick-up**

The infants are picked up at the back of the school. They will line up and the teacher will hand the child over to the parent/guardian. This will give the teachers the opportunity to get to know the parents/guardians, so they know to whom they can safely entrust each child. If on occasion the regular person is unable to come and a nanny or a granny or someone else is coming to pick up the child, please inform the teacher or school secretary. Please do not take your child from the line until the teacher sees you.

## **Birthdays**

Birthdays are important occasions and deserve to be marked. Your children may also be attending or hosting birthday parties. But not all parties have room for everyone in the class, so please be so kind as to give any invitations either to the parents after school, and not in the classroom.

## **Health Checks**

During the primary school years, your child will be able to undergo health screening for hearing and eye-sight. These are carried out in school by the Public Health Nurse/Doctor. There will also be booster immunizations. Parents will be asked to sign a consent form for these tests.

## **Milk Scheme**

A fresh carton of milk is given out to children if the parents wish to enter their child(ren) into the scheme. Parents are asked to pay at the beginning of each year for the milk. A form will be given out every year.

## **School Uniform**

At this school we celebrate and cherish the individuality of the children. We do not want them to all be the same, so we have a NO UNIFORM policy.

## **School Newsletter**

We endeavour to send out the School Newsletter every term. In this newsletter you will find information and news about school activities, facts, fundraising, health and safety and anything else we can think of.

Please read the newsletter carefully, as it may contain important information.

As it is the school's policy to be as kind to the environment as possible, we would like to cut down on the use of paper. We will send out a text message to parents when each new edition of our Newsletter is uploaded onto our website.

## **PE Days**

The pupils have two days during the week when they have P.E. Your child's teacher will inform you when these days are. Please ensure your child wears comfortable clothes and suitable footwear on those days.

## **Walk to School**

The best way to handle the transition between home and school is to walk your child to school. The exercise and fresh air are healthy, and the routine of walking to school gives the child time to mentally prepare for the school day. There are two school wardens on Griffeen Road to assist safe crossing.

If you have to bring the car, please drive with extreme caution on the school grounds and park safely before assisting your children out of the car and into the school.