



GUIDE AND CALENDAR UPDATED AUGUST 2023 FOR PARENTS & GUARDIANS

Gorey Educate Together National School
Scoil Náisiúnta Foghlaim le Chéile, Guaire





Gorey Educate Together National School

Guide for Parents and Guardians

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About us

Our school opened in September 2005 following a sustained campaign by a small group of parents to bring the option of Educate Together primary schooling to Gorey.

The school is Equality-based, Child Centred, Co-Educational and Democratically Run. These are the four principles that underpin the 110+ Educate Together schools across Ireland. The booklet [What is an Educate Together School?](#) gives a clear account of our Ethos. See www.educatetogether.ie

Our school is state funded, regulated by the Department of Education & Skills, and delivers the national Primary School Curriculum: English, Irish, Maths, History, Geography, Science, Visual Arts, Music, Drama, Physical Education and Social, Personal & Health Education (SPHE.)

For 30 minutes each day we work on the Learn Together programme. This programme supports and implements the guiding principles and ethos of the school, and addresses a wide range of moral, social, ethical and religious topics.

In 2008 we opened our first special class for children with autism. Visit www.autism.ie

Our temporary location was the St. Waleran's house on the northern edge of Gorey. The school moved to permanent, purpose-built premises in 2008. Our building was extended during 2009 and facilities now include: 16 large classrooms, library, sports hall, special education facilities and 3 outdoor play areas. Our 'Outdoor Classroom' (an outdoor learning and recreation space) was added in 2013. Our 2015-2017 building project included an additional special education classroom, an extended staffroom and a new play & gardening area.

The school's Board of Management, with the support of the Parent-Teacher Association, has equipped our building to an excellent standard. Investments include: interactive whiteboards for all mainstream classrooms, touch-screen computers for our special classes, a rubberoid safety surface for the infant playground and large amounts of PE equipment, library books and other curriculum resources.

Our pupils' school days are filled with creativity and variety. Along with English, Irish, Maths and all the other subjects, they tend to our school garden; they enjoy 'Seachtain na Gaeilge' & 'Diversity Week'; they participate in science competitions, quizzes and 5-a-side soccer tournaments; they sit on our School Council and Green Schools committee; they organise bake sales for charity; they act, sing and dance in our pantomimes and talent shows.

The school is thriving and continues to develop. Most new families are referred to us by the families of children already attending the school. Some find us through our award-winning website. Visit www.goreyeducatetogether.ie

If you would like to visit our school, please do get in touch. We are always delighted to show parents and children around.

Our pupils are kind-hearted, confident, creative and enthusiastic. They are great ambassadors for Gorey Educate Together!

Raymond Swan
Principal



Our school day (sample timetable)

08.50 - 09.10:	Number of the Day/ Mental Maths/ Cursive Writing
09.10 - 09.15:	Roll Call
09.15 - 09.25:	Irish: Gníomhaíochtaí na Maidine
09.25 - 10.30:	English
10.30 - 10.50:	Break
10.50 - 11.30:	Maths
11.30 - 12.00:	SESE (History, Geography, Science)
12.00 - 12.30:	Learn Together and SPHE
12.30 - 12.50:	Break
12.50 - 13.40:	Irish
13.40 - 14.20:	Art/Music/Drama or PE
14.20 - 14.30:	Homework

(School assemblies on Fridays)

Ethos

Where schools differ from one another is in their *ethos*. The ethos of a school describes its spirit and character. At Gorey Educate Together we work hard to create a positive, inclusive, respectful and supportive atmosphere. Children of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds are equally respected. No child is an *outsider*.

The Learn Together Curriculum

Strand 1: Values and Ethical Perspectives (Sample lessons: roleplay about the concept of conscience; *Circle Time* on 'right and wrong'; meditation and reflection on personal feelings.)

Strand 2: Equality and Justice (Sample lessons: art activity on 'respect'; project on 'The Equal Status Act and discrimination'; discussion and poetry on the topic of homelessness.)

Strand 3: Belief Systems (Sample lessons: project work on 'Christmas around the World'; visit by parent - 'How we celebrate Hanukah'; story and discussion about forgiveness.)

Strand 4: An Ethical Approach to the Environment (Sample lessons: planting bulbs and seeds; litter debate; *Green Schools* assembly; energy survey; art activity on 'sustainability')



1 School times

The school day begins at 8.50am and ends at 1.30pm (Junior and Senior Infants) & 2.30pm (First to Sixth classes).

For the first day of school only, Junior Infants start at 9.30am. For the first few days, they finish at 12noon. Thereafter, the normal infant day applies.

Morning supervision is provided from 8.40am-8.50am (mainly to facilitate our school buses and to help the traffic flow.) No child should be dropped at school before 8.40am.

An optional supervision/activity session (1.30pm-2.30pm) is available to the Junior and Senior Infants who use school buses. The activity leaders are employed by the school's Board of Management and a charge is payable, (€20 per week.)

[See school newsletters for further details.](#)



2 Calendar 2023 - 2024

Term 1

School reopens to pupils at 8.50am, Thursday 31st August 2023

School closes Friday 27th October and reopens Monday 6th November

End of Term, school closes Friday 22nd December

Term 2

School reopens to pupils at 8.50am, Monday 8th January 2024

School closed Monday 5th February

School closed Thursday 15th February and Friday 16th February

School closed Monday 18th March

End of Term, school closes Friday 22nd March*

Term 3

School reopens to pupils at 8.50am, Monday 8th April 2024

School closes Friday 3rd May and reopens Monday 13th May

School closed Monday 3rd June

End of Term, school closes Friday 28th June

(*Monday 25th, Tuesday 26th and Wednesday 27th March 2024 are possible make-up days i.e. if the school was forced to close because of winter weather, etc.)

Every primary school may close for additional days during 2023-2024 to facilitate whole-staff training regarding the revised Primary School Curriculum. Date(s) to be confirmed by the Dept. of Education & Skills.

SEE THE SCHOOL WEBSITE FOR MORE CALENDAR INFORMATION



3 Clothing

The children wear comfortable, casual clothing that they can manage on their own (i.e. for some children Velcro fasteners may be more appropriate than laces; elastic waistbands may be better than buttons and zips, etc.)

Playtimes, as well as art and other activities, cause wear and tear to clothing.

Sweaters and jackets without nametags are seldom returned to their owners. Our Lost and Found cupboard (on the ground floor hallway) is emptied at the end of each term.

There is no school uniform.

Long, dangling earrings are not suitable for school. They present a significant risk of injury if snagged while running on the playground, etc. Chains and necklaces (worn outside clothing) present the same risk.

The children should not wear (or carry) make-up to school. It could become a major distraction in the classrooms.

4 Footwear

The children wear runners/trainers or non-slip shoes to school.

Wearing unsuitable boots, sandals, heels, etc. would mean that the child couldn't participate in a range of daily activities (PE, dance, playground games, etc.)

Heelies/wheelies, high heels and steel-capped boots are not permitted.

5 Lunches

The children bring packed lunches to school.

They need balanced, healthy lunches each day. (Look out for the overall sugar and fat levels!) They need to be able to open, close and/or peel the lunch by themselves. (Please choose suitable containers and practise at home.) They need to provide their own spoons.

The children are asked not to share their lunches, and to take uneaten lunch home with them (so that parents are kept informed of their child's eating.) They also take all food packaging home with them each day.

Chewing gum, sticky sweets, fizzy drinks, high-sugar drinks, chips and crisps are not allowed. (If you need to agree an occasional treat with your child, please choose one of the following: scone, plain bun/cake (no icing), brack, plain biscuits, one small bar.)

The children need to be able to talk about their food allergies. Nuts are not allowed in the infant classes.

Birthday Cakes: Pupils shouldn't share birthday cakes or other birthday treats with their class. (High number of treats/children with allergies/some children & parents feeling under pressure to provide a cake for the class because others have done so, etc.)





6 Medicines

Please request a copy of our Administration of Medicines policy for details regarding inhalers, prescription medicines and life-threatening medical conditions, (or visit the policies section at www.goreyeducatetogether.ie)

In general, the children may not carry non-prescription medicines to school (including cold remedies, pain relief tablets, cough syrup, etc.) Parents can visit their child during the school day to administer these or other medicines.

Please remember to update your child's medical record regularly. Update the child's Aladdin Connect School App profile or contact the school office.

7 First Aid

We clean cuts & grazes using water and apply plasters. (The children need to be able to talk about their allergies.) We supply ice-packs for bumps and bruises. Parents should always double-check cuts or bruises when the child gets home.

We contact parents regarding the more serious injuries.

The school is equipped with an Automatic External Defibrillator (sponsored by Gorey Heart Safe) and a number of staff are trained in its use.

8 Mobile phones, electronic games and toys

Mobile phones, electronic games, personal music players and some toys can be very distracting, anti-social or unsafe in a school environment.

The Board of Management discourages (and asks all parents to discourage) pupils from bringing mobile phones to school.

However, the Board recognises that in some cases parents may ask their child to carry a phone so that they may contact the child after school, etc. Where an older pupil does bring a phone to school, the phone must remain switched off (in the child's schoolbag) during the school day and may not be used on school premises, grounds or during off-site school activities (such as swimming or trips.)

The use of electronic games, personal music players, etc is not permitted during the school day (including arrival, class time, breaks and dismissal.)

The playground and classrooms are well equipped with materials. Some class teachers, depending on the age of the pupils, may make arrangements where the children can bring another appropriate toy to school on particular days (last day of term, some Fridays, etc.) or where the child can bring a comforter, such as a soft toy, to school.

Toy guns/swords/knives, skateboards, roller skates, hurls, baseball bats, etc. are not permitted.



9 Traffic arrangements

Mind that child! Drive with extreme care on school grounds.
Keep clear of pedestrian crossings.

Mornings: Set-down only on the school grounds. Morning supervision (8.40am-8.50am) is provided for children being dropped off. (Otherwise, drivers may find some parking along Kilnahue Lane.) Wherever possible, avoid driving onto the school grounds around 8.50am and 2.30pm each day - e.g. for older children, arrange a drop-off and collection point some distance from the school gates.

1.30pm pick-up: All Junior and Senior Infants are escorted to the front of the building. Drivers entering the school grounds should only leave their vehicles for the few seconds it takes to collect younger children from the teachers.

2.30pm pick-up: The children are escorted to the front of the building. No stopping or parking in the area reserved for school buses.

The ‘Set Down Only’ road markings mean: staying with your car, dropping children off/picking children up, and “keep moving.”

10 School buses

There are several bus routes at present, covering a large area (see maps on school notice boards and the school website.)
Transport is not usually available to families living close to the

school, (including most parts of Gorey town.)

There is one morning drop-off (between 8.40am and 8.50am) and one afternoon pick-up (at 2.30pm.)

The School Transport Office, Bus Éireann, Waterford handles all requests for tickets and all decisions regarding tickets and routes are made by Bus Éireann and/or the School Transport Section, Department of Education & Skills. (See primary school transportscheme at www.citizensinformation.ie)

Unsafe and inappropriate behaviour is not tolerated on school buses and will result in permission to travel being withdrawn (temporarily or, in more serious instances, permanently.) Families experiencing difficulties should speak with the bus driver or contact Bus Éireann.

11 Transport grant

Families living more than 3.2 kilometres (2 miles) from the school and/or from the nearest school bus pick-up point may be eligible for a Department of Education & Skills grant towards their transport costs. (See primary school transport scheme at www.citizensinformation.ie)





12 School supplies/books

The children's books, copies and main classroom supplies are provided free-of-charge, (under the Government's new 'Free Primary Schoolbooks Scheme.')

The children write in many of their workbooks. Some books are marked 'Book Rental,' and they should not be written in.

Families need to pay for lost or damaged books or copies. Families may also need to pay towards the cost of special art projects, extra photocopying, etc. at certain times of the year.

Families need to provide the following throughout the school year: pencil case, eraser, sharpener, pencils and colouring pencils. (Also, spare copy books: 1st-6th classes; ruler: 2nd-6th classes; pens: 4th-6th classes; calculator 5th-6th classes.)

Tips:

Ensure that your child's school bag is big enough to hold their lunch, spare clothes and an A4 homework folder.

Label clothing and other belongings.

Infants also need some spare clothing, in case of bathroom accident.

13 Voluntary contributions scheme

Educate Together schools receive the same level of state funding as all other National Schools. However, state grants do not cover our running costs. In common with the majority of national schools, we top-up state grants with fundraisers such as fairs, quizzes, raffles and sponsored walks. We also have a system of voluntary contributions, where parents are encouraged to contribute between €15 and €21 per month towards equipping and maintaining our school.

Letters detailing the scheme are sent to all families twice yearly, (during October and March.)

Some families pay an annual lump sum. Others pay monthly (by cash, cheque or Bank Direct Debit.)

14 Other costs

Families may wish to budget for other costs, including: school trips (average cost €20 - €40), optional after-school swimming (average cost €40), optional PTA after-school activities (average cost €40.)



15 Attendance and punctuality

Make education important in your home! It is not OK to miss school. It is not OK to be late. Be proud of a good attendance and punctuality record.

The children can only be marked present if they are in attendance when each morning roll is called.

Parents should explain the reasons for all school absences using the Aladdin Connect App.

High levels of non-attendance are reported automatically to the National Educational Welfare Board, 16-22 Green Street, Dublin 7. (It is our policy to report on all age groups.)

Parents and pupils are reminded to be punctual. Lateness (after 8.50am) significantly disrupts the classes and late collection (after 1.30pm and 2.30pm) can upset the child and interrupt the work of the staff.

16 Home-school communication

The school regularly issues newsletters and notices to families via the 'Aladdin Connect' and 'Class Dojo' online platforms. Newsletters and school policies are also posted on

www.goreyeducatetogether.ie

Parents and staff exchange messages via the Class Dojo online platform. One-to-one phone calls and meetings are arranged to discuss more detailed queries or concerns.

Parents, guardians and teachers are encouraged to communicate queries, concerns or issues which may be affecting the child at the earliest opportunity.

Such communication should follow direct lines: Each parent must communicate directly with their child's teacher or principal on each issue affecting their child. There is no system of 'representation' on such matters – i.e. members of the Board, the PTA, or any other group have no such function. Again, individual parents should feel free to approach their child's teacher at an early stage.

Formal parent-teacher meetings are held in November. School reports are issued in June.

The school should be notified immediately of any change of details (address, telephone numbers, etc.) by updating your Aladdin Connect App. profile.





17 Parental involvement

Parents and guardians are encouraged to participate in their child's education and in the life of the school. See our Parental Involvement Policy.

Two parents are elected to the school's Board of Management. All parents can become involved in the work of our Parent-Teacher Association (PTA.) Joining the national Educate Together organisation is also encouraged.

In classes parents work under the professional direction of the teaching staff. During the school year the teachers timetable available parents/guardians to assist with activities such as paired reading, write-a-book project, shared maths, art project, science/environmental project, etc.

Parents with particular skills or interests and time to spare are encouraged to approach the staff or the Parent Class Reps with their ideas.



18 Parent-Teacher Association (PTA)

Our PTA was established during 2006. All parents and staff are members, and an organising committee is elected each year at the association's Annual General Meeting.

The PTA holds coffee mornings/social gatherings for parents and staff. Other work includes: running a programme of after-school activities; the Parents' Library; fundraising; information evenings with guest speakers.

The optional PTA after-school programme gives the children a tasting of various activities. (Families who wish to follow up on a particular activity for their child could then enquire at local clubs and studios.) Past programmes include: guitar, bodhrán, drama, dance & movement, soccer and art. A charge is payable.

Members of the organising committee submit Garda Vetting ('police check') forms to the school principal.





19 Board of Management

A Board manages the school on behalf of Educate Together (our Patron) in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the policies of the Department of Education & Skills.

See www.citizensinformation.ie

The term of office for the current Board runs from 1st December 2019 – 30th November 2023.

Members: Sarah Anderson (Chairperson and Patron's Appointee,) Raymond Swan (Board Secretary and School Principal,) Tony Ahern (Treasurer and Community Representative,) Angie Dooley (Community Representative,) David O'Shea (elected Teacher Representative,) Olive Doherty (elected Parent Representative,) and David Bolger (elected Parent Representative.)

The Board meets monthly. A report to families and staff on the workings of each Board meeting is published on the school website.

The school's financial accounts are certified annually by Eugene T. Doyle Accountants, Enniscorthy. Newly prepared accounts are posted on the school notice board.

Contacting the Chairperson: please leave a written message in the school office or in the Board of Management mailbox (inside the main school entrance.)

20 The school plan

The Board of Management has responsibility for the development of our School Plan. A School Plan deals with the curriculum and with a range of administrative and organisational issues. The school's strategies for implementing official guidelines, regulations and legislation are also included in the plan.

As well as curricular documents, our School Plan currently contains the following elements:

- School Guide for Parents and Guardians
- Vision/Mission Statement (What is an Educate Together School?)
- Safety Statement
- Enrolment Policy
- Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy
- Internet Acceptable Usage Policy and ICT Plan
- Home/School Communication Systems
- School Calendar
- Use of Mobile Phones and other (Personal) Technology in School Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- School Attendance Policy
- Administration of Medicines Policy
- Special Classes for Children with Autism
- Parental Involvement Policy
- School Improvement Plans

These and other policies are reviewed and developed by the staff and the Board on an ongoing basis. An inspection copy of the School Plan is available from the PTA secretary. Most elements of the plan are also available on the school's website.



21 Child protection

This school implements the Department of Education's Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

All children attending the school are taught the 'Stay Safe' child abuse prevention programme.

22 Sharing of information

We share information (names, addresses, dates of birth, PPS numbers, telephone numbers) with the Department of Education & Skills, the National Educational Welfare Board, the Health Service Executive and Bus Éireann. Such sharing of information enables the organisation of a number of programmes, including the school transport scheme and various health screening & vaccination schemes. (Parental consent is required regarding the delivery of all such schemes.)

The school uses the 'Aladdin Schools' online software service. See www.aladdinschools.ie for privacy and security information. The school also uses the 'Class Dojo' online platform for Home-School Communication.

The school's updated Data Protection Privacy Statement is available on the school website.

23 Photography

The staff often use photography within the classrooms and to record school events such as trips, projects, sports (except swimming), etc. On occasion, group photos are uploaded to the school's website. (Photos focusing on individual children will not be used.) In all cases, the children's full names will not be included with their photographs. The local newspapers also cover some school events, (and may use the children's full names.)

Parents who do not want their children photographed are asked to send a note to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

24 Religion classes

There is no doctrinal instruction during the school day.

The school enables parents to organise religion classes outside the school day by helping them to distribute letters or by making the school building available.

(For example, in the years 2005-2023 groups of Catholic parents organised preparation for First Holy Communion and Confirmation by linking in with a local Catholic parish.)

25 Complaints/grievance procedure

- A. Parent approaches the class teacher, with a view to resolving the complaint.
- B. If the matter remains unresolved, the parent approaches the school principal.
- C. If unresolved, the parent sends a note to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.
- D. If unresolved, the parent should forward a precise written complaint to the Chairperson.
- E. If the matter remains unresolved, the Chairperson refers it to the Board for investigation.

26 Substitute staff and trainees

The school employs substitute teachers and special needs assistants to cover illnesses and other staff absences, such as in-service training. These substitutes work under the direction of the Principal and follow our plans and routines as closely as possible.



The Department of Education does not sanction substitute cover for every absence. In such cases, the children spend their school day with another class.

Our school also facilitates a limited number of trainee teachers and special needs assistants. All trainees work under the supervision of school staff.

27 Help for families

There are over 100 Family Resource Centres located throughout Ireland. The Centres are government-funded community organisations. Gorey Family Resource Centre is located at 4 Charlotte Row, Upper Main Street. Tel: 053 948 9017.

www.goreyfrc.org

Supports include: information on rights and entitlements, 'New 2 Gorey' group, English language classes, translation services, counselling services, support group for parents of children with special needs, budgeting advice and personal development courses.

Contacting the school:

Gorey Educate Together NS,
Kilnahue Lane, Carnew Road,
Gorey, Co. Wexford

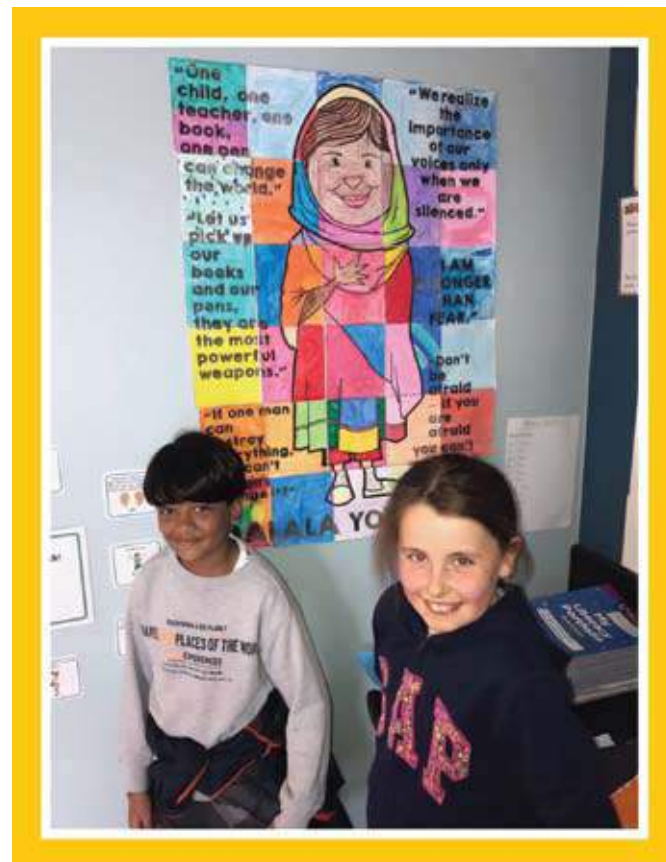
Telephone: 053 94 89662

E-mail: info@goreyeducatetogether.ie

Web: www.goreyeducatetogether.ie

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any further queries you may have.

Please keep this guide in a safe place.



Gorey Educate Together National School

Our Whole-School Charter

'VISION WITH ACTION'

A
SAFE
PLACE



OUR
BEST
TEACHING
& LEARNING!



FRIENDSHIP
AND
HAPPINESS!



A
BULLY
FREE
SCHOOL



RESPECT
FOR
EVERYONE



"ACTION WITHOUT VISION IS ONLY PASSING TIME, VISION WITHOUT ACTION IS MERELY DAYDREAMING, BUT VISION WITH ACTION CAN CHANGE THE WORLD."

NELSON MANDELA

School Calendar 2023-2024

Term 1

School reopens to pupils at 8.50am, Thursday 31st August 2023

School closes Friday 27th October and reopens Monday 6th November

End of Term, school closes Friday 22nd December

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School closes Friday 3rd May and reopens Monday 13th May

School closed Monday 3rd June

End of Term, school closes Friday 28th June

*Monday 25th, Tuesday 26th and Wednesday 27th March 2024 are possible make-up days i.e., if the school was forced to close because of winter weather, etc.

Data Protection and Security

The school gathers and processes your child's personal data for the purposes of administering their education.

To facilitate this, staff will input your child's data into the school's Management Information System, 'Aladdin.'

Aladdin is a secure software service application which is owned and run by Cloudware Ltd. (t/a Aladdin Schools), from where the data is only processed for the above purpose. The security of your data is of the utmost importance to Aladdin and they partner with global industry leaders to ensure this is the case.

They use Google to store school information in data centres within the EU that are independently audited and certified to international standards.

Your attention is also drawn to sections 22 and 23 of this booklet: 'Sharing of Information' and 'Photography.'

Gorey Educate Together National School

Kilnahue Lane, Carnew Road, Gorey, Co. Wexford

Tel: 053 948 9662 Fax: 053 948 9660 Email: info@goreyeducatetogether.ie

www.goreyeducatetogether.ie

SCHOOL ROLL No. 20214H REGISTERED CHARITY No. 20138684