



ST. PATRICK'S NATIONAL SCHOOL

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Principal: Rachel Harper

Deputy Principal: Hannah O'Connor

Board of Management – Chairperson: Canon David Mungavin

Supervision including Yard

2026

Introduction

All members of school staff have a duty of care to make sure that the pupils are safe and healthy. They also have a common law duty to act as a prudent parent would.

Supervision of pupils

At the time of pupils' enrolment, parents are made aware of the school's opening times, as well as daily routines and procedures for leaving and collecting children. They are reminded of these times at the beginning of each new academic year.

Daily timetable

Time	Activity	Notes
before 08.25		The children are not the responsibility of the school until the school opens at 08.25. Where possible they should NOT be on the premises before 08.25.
08.25 - 08.45	assembly time	Junior classes: free play/reading
		Senior classes: preparation for the school day, corrections, etc
08.45	formal classes begin	all pupils should be settled in their classroom and ready to begin the day's activities
10.20 - 10.30	short break	Children play outside weather permitting
12.00 - 12.10	lunch break	Children eat lunch in their classrooms
12.10 - 12.30		Children play outside, weather permitting
13.05	school finishes	Junior and Senior Infant classes collected at main reception door
14.05	school finishes	First to Sixth Classes may leave school independently

* alternative arrangements may be made by a class teacher in consultation with the Principal

The school is open to receive pupils at 08.25. No responsibility is accepted for pupils arriving before that time. The bell rings at 08.40 (to remind visitors, including parents, to leave as classes will begin in 5 minutes), and again at 08.45 (at which time formal classes begin). Classes end each day at 13.05 (Infant classes) and 14.05 (all other classes).

Dismissal

Teachers supervise the orderly dismissal of all pupils and ensure that all classrooms are vacated at this time. Pupils from Junior Infants to 2nd class inclusive, are directly handed over to parents, or other adults nominated by parents and made known to the relevant teachers.

Pupils in 3rd and 4th class must be collected by an adult known to the relevant teachers. Parents may choose to make their own arrangements whereby their child is escorted from the school gate to a car park. Requests must be made **in writing** to the school, if parents wish for a pupil in 3rd and 4th class to leave the school independently.

Pupils in 5th and 6th class are permitted to leave the school independently. All students must exit the school grounds at 2.05pm as the school cannot accept responsibility for the supervision of children after that time.

Break and lunchtime supervision

During each outdoor break there are teachers and SNAs on duty, in each playground zone, there will be a minimum of 1 teacher and 1 SNA. Please see Appendix 1 for more details.

A rota, prepared by ISM (In School Management), is distributed to all teachers and is displayed in the Staff Room. The SNA's role as a playground supervisor is very similar to that of the teacher supervisor but does not carry the same weight of responsibility. They ensure that the children in their care are visible to them at all times. SNAs may sometimes be asked to observe the behaviour of individual children in the playground, should such observation be deemed helpful in supporting those children or others.

All adult supervisors wear a high-visibility jacket to help to ensure that they are always visible to the children in their care.

Areas to be supervised

Four main areas are designated as outdoor play areas, one to accommodate junior classes and three for the senior classes. These areas may change from time to time, depending on weather and ground conditions. Teachers are informed of changes in designated areas as these arise.

Children should be accompanied to and from the play area. Assurance that all areas of the yard are supervised is the responsibility of the teacher on duty, with delegation to SNAs as appropriate. Teachers and SNAs on supervision duty should wear a high visibility jacket for the duration of the supervision period. Teachers also need a whistle.

During outdoor break times, all pupils must stay within the designated area for their class grouping. Children are not permitted to engage in boisterous behaviour, rough play or dangerous games, and may not leave the play area without the permission of the teacher on duty. If a child needs to use the toilet during break time, he/she must obtain permission from the teacher on duty.

General school rules apply at all times:

- be respectful of yourself, your school and others
- keep your school tidy
- be kind

- be safe
- be on time
- be organised
- be positive
- follow instructions from all staff.

Play ceases in response to the bell and whistle, at which time children stop playing and proceed to their class line on the instruction of the teacher on duty. Children are expected to line up in an orderly fashion. All classes are accompanied to their own classroom.

Incidents and accidents

The teacher on duty is responsible for all matters relating to issues such as behaviour management. The children should be encouraged to play sensibly and fairly. However, should an incident of misbehaviour occur the teacher must intervene and decide on an appropriate course of action.

Arguments can sometimes be sorted out amicably, but serious incidents of aggression require consequences. We will refer to our Code of Behaviour in these instances. Children may be asked to stand to one side of the play area for a specified number of minutes or, if the Teacher-on-Duty deems it necessary, a child may be sent indoors for the remainder of the break time.

Incidents of concern witnessed by other supervising staff should be referred to the teacher on duty, who will take the appropriate action (Code of Behaviour). The teacher is responsible for ensuring that an *incident report form* is completed and provided to the class teacher and Principal. The report should include date, time, location, nature of the incident, names of witnesses and action taken afterwards (including the first aid response, if required.)

In the case of an accident on the yard, the supervising teacher may arrange for the child(ren) to be accompanied to the indoor benches in the foyer for the administration of first-aid as required. He/she is also responsible for ensuring that an *accident report form* is completed and provided to the class teacher and Principal. The report should include date, time, location, nature of the incident, names of witnesses and action taken afterwards (including the first aid response.)

Both incident and accident reports will be shared with parents for signature (mostly via email) and the hard copy is filed securely, in the main office.

Activities and zones

Activities that are permitted in the playground vary depending on the time of year as well as health and safety considerations. Pupils' suggestions are welcomed. Arrangements for specific areas for each class are reviewed by staff on a regular basis, depending on weather conditions.

Our garden seating area provides quiet chatting areas for children and is an area where outdoor learning can be supported.

Our tarmac yards, astro pitch, artificial grass and shared football grounds include open spaces for running around, informal ball games and activities. The junior courtyards are marked with hopscotch and various obstacle courses to follow.

All of our yards contain friendship stops where children can go if they are unsure of what they would like to do at break times. The children know to 'pick-up' or 'check-in' with anyone standing at a friendship stop.

Please see Appendix 1 for a map of our school grounds that highlights each play zone.

The Play areas in our school can also provide opportunities for children to learn and develop:

- Social Skills – when they play with other children they learn to communicate, share, collaborate and empathise with others.
- Imagination and creativity – outside play is often open-ended and children need to be creative about what and how games are played.
- Thinking and problem-solving skills – as children assess risks and tackle new challenges, they learn about having a go, persistence and perseverance and the success those attributes can bring.
- Sense of self – as they master new skills and play with other children, they improve their competence and confidence in their own physical and social abilities.
- Sense of connection – to place, to peers and to their local community and environment.
- Self-care skills – managing physical and social challenges helps children to learn about keeping themselves safe.

Hazards

The following hazards are considered by the school to be a source of potential danger and are brought to the attention of all concerned:

- Appropriate use of balancing equipment – children can move this themselves but need to be mindful of others within hitting vicinity when moving the lengths. No pushing on the balances.
- Appropriate use of basketball hoops and football netting – the children can move this equipment around themselves but must not climb, swing or jump onto it as it may topple over.
- Adequate supervision of play – a member of staff needs to be present at all times when children are using any play equipment. Children need to be reminded of the rules when play

becomes too boisterous.

Indoor supervision

Indoor supervision may be required if a child is unwell, or suffers an injury in the playground, or if a child is required to remain indoors for a period of time as a result of a consequence. A child who is unwell may only remain indoors with an explanatory note from a parent, or on the recommendation of a teacher.

In the event of wet or extreme weather, teachers work as a team in order to ensure adequate supervision of pupils at all times. In most cases, such teams operate between classes located side by side such as 1st classes together. The SET team are also on hand to assist with supervision here.

Supervision away from the school premises

Special supervision arrangements apply for out-of-school activities such as tours and excursions including swimming. A higher level of supervision is required than within the school grounds. Parents are given written details of all outings, and must provide written permission for their child to participate in such activities, including information (allergies) and contact details. The teacher in charge will follow guidelines as detailed in the school policy Tours and Excursions.

Staffing arrangements

Rota and arrangements for the provision of supervision (ref *Primary Boards of Management - information manual*, DES 2007, pp31-32)

Circular 21/02 outlined the DES arrangements for the provision of funding for supervision during mid-morning and lunch-time breaks. At the end of each school year, the school certifies that the supervision duties have been carried out accordingly.

The Deputy Principal is responsible for drawing up, updating and overseeing the supervision rota. Each teacher receives a copy of the rota, and a copy is also posted in the staff room.

Absences

Teachers absent from school on short-term special leave such as EPV days, arrange cover on an individual basis by agreeing to swap duty with a colleague. In the case of teacher absence through

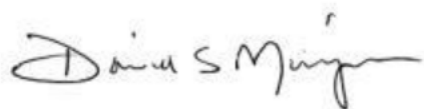
illness, the cover teacher may opt to complete the supervision, or the SET team may step in to assist.

Ratification, communication and implementation

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in June 2026. It was immediately made available directly to all staff, and to parents through the school office. The policy was implemented immediately following ratification.

Review

This policy will be revised on an on-going basis, as needs are noted by the education partners and addressed by the Board of Management. It will be fully reviewed in 2031.

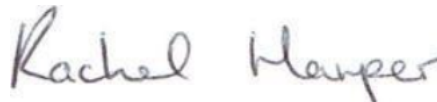


Signed:

Canon David Mungavin

Chairperson Board of Management

Date: June 2026



Signed:

Rachel Harper

Principal

Date: June 20206

Appendix 1 Background

references

Circular 18/03

Duty of care

"Rules 121(4) and 124(1) of the Rules for National Schools oblige teachers to take all reasonable precautions to ensure the safety of pupils and to participate in supervising pupils when the pupils are on the school premises, during school time and/or on school activities. Accordingly, the responsibility of all teachers individually and collectively to provide a duty of care at all times towards the children in the school in which they teach, including periods of supervision, is not changed".

General guidelines on supervision

"It is a matter for the Principal Teacher, in consultation with the Board of Management to prepare the roster for supervision. Your attention is drawn to the importance of the role of the Principal teacher in managing, monitoring and participating in the supervision of the pupils during mid-morning and lunch breaks. The roster should include arrangements for providing supervision for short-term absences. It should be submitted to the Board of Management for approval and should be retained in the school for inspection by Department officials."

Primary Education Management Manual, Thompson Round Hall

General principles – duty of care

The key point on pupil supervision is that the school has a duty of care to its pupils from the time the school gates open in the morning until they close in the afternoon. The primary responsibility/duty of care for pupils falls on the class teacher. Depending on the size of the school, systems can be put in place to supervise pupils in the playground on a rota basis. This does not alleviate, diminish or reduce the duty placed on a class teacher for his or her class.

The 'duty of care' placed on a teacher is to take such care of his or her pupils as a careful parent would of his or her children. In practice, the courts have imposed a greater onus on teachers to care for their pupils than would be expected of a reasonable parent. The level of supervision should take account of:

- the age/maturity of the pupils;

- the numbers involved;
- the layout of the building or yard;
- any special circumstances, eg PE (*Chapter 3, paragraph 2:32*).

All schools must take reasonable care for the safety of the pupils when pupils are under their charge. This applies not only to periods during break or play time but also to the periods between the pupils arrival at school and the start of the school day and from dismissal in the afternoon until, for example, the school bus leaves where pupils remain on school property. (*Chapter 3, paragraph 3:27*).

