

BELGROVE SENIOR GIRLS' SCHOOL

SCOIL EOIN BAISTE CAILÍNÍ SINSEAR

***INTRODUCTORY BOOKLET
FOR
PARENTS***

MEITHEAMH/JUNE 2011

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1. Introduction:

Our aim here in Belgrove Senior Girls' is to help each child to achieve her full potential. Together with her educational development, each child's personal, emotional and social development is our priority. The building of each child's self-esteem is of prime importance. We inculcate in our pupils, good behaviour patterns based on consideration, respect and tolerance for others. We aim to maintain a safe and happy environment for our pupils, with a positive atmosphere of encouragement and praise.

“Mol an óige agus tiocfaidh sí!”

2. A Brief History of our School:

Belgrove Senior Girls' School first opened in our present building in 1969/70. However, the origins of our school go back quite a bit further.

The original Clontarf National Schools for girls and boys were on Vernon Avenue and opened in 1847. In 1940 the schools moved to Belgrove House, the building which is now the home of Clontarf G.A.A. Club. At this time the schools were officially titled St. John the Baptist National Schools, as Gaeilge, Scoil Eoin Baiste. The name Belgrove was colloquially adopted and, to this day, is the name by which the schools are fondly known far and wide.

Throughout the years Belgrove has gained an excellent reputation for its high educational standards and the high level of achievement of its pupils. The present-day staff and pupils aim to maintain this standard of excellence. In this we have the support of parents who take an active interest in the education of their children.

3. Enrolment, Staff and Accommodation:

- ❖ Belgrove Senior Girls' School is a Catholic Primary School operating within the rules of the Dept. of Education and Science and under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin. The school caters for girls from Second to Sixth Class.
- ❖ This year the School Staff comprises the Principal, sixteen Class Teachers (including job-sharing teachers), a Learning Support Teacher, a Resource Teacher, two Special Needs Assistants, a School Secretary, a Caretaker and a Classroom Assistant. We share a second Learning Support Teacher and also a Teacher of English for designated non-national pupils, with Belgrove Infant Girls' School. Through parental funding, a specialist PE Teacher is also employed in the school.
- ❖ Within the main school building, we have fourteen classrooms and a Computer Room. The fifteenth classroom is in a portacabin, along with the Learning Support Teacher's room and that of the Resource Teacher.

The school has a well-stocked Library, which is housed in a portacabin in the courtyard.

We also have a large School Hall which is shared with the Junior School. The school has a large playground and also shares the use of Clontarf GAA Club's astroturf pitch during school hours.

4. Board of Management:

- ❖ Our school has a dedicated and hard-working Board of Management, which meets regularly.
- ❖ The Board has eight members, with equal representation from the Patron, the Teaching Staff, Parents, and the wider community.

5. Parents' Association:

- ❖ Our school has a very active Parents' Association. The support of our Parents is invaluable to the school, in many practical ways. The Parents' Association is always looking for new parents willing to assist them in their activities. Make sure to make contact if you would like to help.
- ❖ Seeing their parents actively involved in the school has a positive effect on children.
- ❖ Teachers often require the assistance of parents in different ways in the classroom. Let your daughter's teacher know, if you have a particular skill or occupation, which you might like to share with the class!

6. Teaching Staff and Curriculum:

- ❖ As a Teaching Staff we constantly strive to follow best practice in our profession and work very hard to achieve high standards, in a pleasant learning environment for our pupils. Staff-pupil relationships and inter-staff relationships are very positive and friendly, based on mutual respect and trust.
- ❖ We embrace the ideals of the Revised Primary School Curriculum, which is very holistic, encompassing the whole development of each child. The Revised Curriculum focuses on the child as a learner and aims to help children to develop strategies to equip them for lifelong learning. The methodologies that are recommended in teaching the Revised Curriculum aim to make the children more actively involved in the learning process.
- ❖ The process of in-service training for the Revised Primary School Curriculum is complete and the revised curriculum is being implemented in the school.
- ❖ The Revised Primary School Curriculum consists of eleven subject areas:

English	History	Visual Arts
Gaeilge	Geography	Physical Education
Mathematics	Science	Drama
S.P.H.E.	Music	

❖ **Social, Personal & Health Education (SPHE):**

The curriculum subject, SPHE, incorporates three main areas, as indicated in the following programmes in use in the school:

RSE – Relationships and Sexuality Programme

Walk Tall – Substance Misuse Prevention Programme (emphasises the importance of self-esteem)

Stay Safe – Child Abuse Prevention Programme

The following school policy documents relating to SPHE are available for inspection in the school:

- SPHE Policy Plan
 - RSE School Policy Statement
 - School Substance Use Policy
 - Child Protection Policy – Children First
- *Please note that the school follows the Children First National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children.*

❖ **IT:** Information Technology is used as a teaching and learning tool in the school. In addition to the sixteen PCs in our Computer Room, there is a computer in each classroom and the entire school is networked and has Broadband. Interactive Whiteboards are now in use in all classrooms.

The school has an Internet Acceptable Use Policy with which staff and pupils must comply. **You will receive a copy of our Internet Acceptable Use Policy in September.*

7. Home-School Liaison:

- ❖ Good communication and co-operation between parents and teachers is fundamental to the development of an effective and happy learning environment for your children.
- ❖ Parents are always welcome in the school. You are encouraged to keep in regular contact with your daughter's teacher and to be aware of her progress at school. It is important also, for the teacher to know of any concerns you may have, so that you can work together for the child's welfare.
- ❖ It is important to inform your child's teacher each year of relevant family information which may affect her wellbeing at school. It is best not to assume that such sensitive information has been passed on from the Junior School or from your daughter's last teacher in the Senior School.
- ❖ We ask you not to call unexpectedly to see your daughter's teacher, as she will be unable to talk to you. If you wish to discuss something **please arrange an appointment with her**. If you wish to meet with the School Principal you are also requested to make a prior appointment.
- ❖ When calling to the school always use the main front entrance and ring the bell marked 'Senior School'.

- ❖ Formal Parent/ Teacher meetings are held each year, usually in late November or early December.
- ❖ Annual School Reports are issued at Easter. This gives you the opportunity to discuss any area of concern on the Report with your daughter's teacher during the last term of the year.
- ❖ Your child's Homework Journal is a daily contact with school and should be checked each day by you, for communication purposes.
- ❖ Newsletters, notices, leaflets etc. are usually sent home with the children. Please arrange a system with your daughter, for ensuring that you receive these from her.

8. The School Day:

- ❖ The official opening time of the school is **8.40am**. Supervision begins at this time. Classes commence at 9.00am and end at **2.20pm**.
- ❖ **No responsibility is accepted for pupils arriving before 8.40am. No responsibility is accepted for pupils who are left on the school premises after 2.20pm unless they are engaged in an organised extra-curricular activity.**
- ❖ Please ensure that your child arrives punctually every day and that she has all her books, copies, pencils etc. in good order for the day.
- ❖ If you are driving your daughter to or from school, you are asked to respect the no stopping zone around the school entrance, to obey the directions of the School Warden and not to park in front of neighbours' gateways.
- ❖ **Bicycles at school: If your daughter cycles to school and parks her bike in the school grounds, you must ensure that it is insured, as it is not covered by the school insurance.**
- ❖ **Home-time:** At 2.20pm your daughter's Class Teacher will escort her class towards the school gate. Where possible, arrange to meet your daughter outside the gate, as the area in front of the school can become very congested. If your daughter is attending an extra-curricular class straight after school, she should remain on the school premises and go directly to the classroom in question.
- ❖ **Extra-curricular classes:** Information regarding these classes is distributed by the individual teachers involved, in September.

9. Uniforms:

- ❖ Your daughter is required to wear the **correct school uniform** each day. Belgrove Senior Girls' School uniform is available in Pender's on Vernon Avenue and Lynch's of Marino. The required uniform is listed on the back of your daughter's Booklist. Uniform tracksuits with **white polo-shirts** are required wear for PE.

- ❖ Please note that suitable flat shoes are required for school wear and trainers (with laces tied properly) are required for PE. When purchasing trainers for PE please ensure that they are suitable for sports wear and not just designer wear. ‘Heelies’, the little wheels on certain trainers, are forbidden at school.
- ❖ No jewellery of any kind should ever be worn at PE and only minimum “safe” jewellery should be worn at any other time.
- ❖ **Please put your daughter’s name clearly on her jumper, tracksuit-top, jacket and on any other garment which could be mislaid or mixed up with another.**
- ❖ An old shirt or overall can be very handy to protect your daughter’s uniform at Art-time.

10. Healthy Lunch:

- ❖ *Your child should have a healthy and nutritious lunch each day.* Thankfully, most Belgrove parents are aware of the importance of this for your children’s well-being and also for their ability to concentrate at school. Please try to avoid fizzy drinks, sweet things or chocolate, and to always include a healthy content (e.g. sandwich, pitta bread, rice-cake, fruit, veg etc.). Popcorn, while fairly healthy, is not a terribly suitable option for school. It takes a long time to eat and too often ends up on the floor!
- ❖ Our school took part in the ‘Food Dudes’ project some time ago, which promotes the daily eating of fresh fruit and vegetables. Our parents and pupils have kept up these healthy lunch options very well since and we encourage new parents to do the same.
- ❖ **We do not allow crisps or chewing gum** and sweets are also discouraged.
- ❖ Please make sure that your child has a secure container for her drink.
- ❖ Glass bottles are forbidden.
- ❖ We take part in the E.U. Milk Scheme, which offers subsidised milk to school children. Orders for the year are taken in September.
- ❖ We ask you to ensure that your daughter brings home for recycling, her empty milk or juice tetra-pack cartons. We recommend that she has a little bag with her lunch-box for these. School recycling bins do not have the capacity for the collection of tetra pack cartons in such quantity, nor is there the time in school for the daily rinsing out that would be involved.
- ❖ Any unfinished lunch should be brought home. This will ensure that you know what your daughter is or is not eating at school.
- ❖ There are two breaks during the school day, a short break from 10.30am-10.40am and a longer break from 12.15pm-12.45pm.

11. Absences, Illness etc.:

- ❖ If your child has been absent from school, *it is essential* that a written note explaining the reason for her absence is submitted to her teacher, on her return to school.
- ❖ All pre-arranged absences e.g. medical appointments, music exams etc. should be notified in writing to the class teacher prior to the absence.
- ❖ If your child has to leave school early, for whatever reason, you must send a note to her teacher or call for her in person.
- ❖ Holidays during term are not encouraged. Neither is it the policy of the school to set 'holiday work' for pupils. Attendance at school is very important and the work of the school continues right up to the end of June each year. If family holidays during term time are unavoidable, please inform your child's Class Teacher in writing, in advance of the proposed absence from school.
- ❖ **Please note that absences totalling 20 days or over, must be reported to the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB). The precise reason for each absence must be stated – hence the importance of written notes to the class teacher.**
- ❖ Please *do not* send your child to school if she is ill.
- ❖ **Any infectious illness should be notified to the school without delay.**
- ❖ If your child has an infectious illness or similar ailment, please consult your doctor or the Health Board, before sending her back to school.
- ❖ Head-lice are a recurring problem in schools. It is *every* parent's responsibility to remain vigilant in this regard and to check your daughter's hair on a regular basis.

12. Accidents and Emergencies:

- ❖ The school retains the contact telephone numbers on each child's Enrolment Form. Please notify us of any change of number.
- ❖ **In the event of a serious accident parents or guardians will be contacted immediately. If necessary an ambulance will be called.**
- ❖ Minor cuts or stings will be treated in accordance with parental permission on Enrolment Form.
- ❖ In the event of illness or injury (e.g. a bang on the head or a sprain), parents or guardians will be contacted.

- ❖ **It is now Board of Management policy that all pupils will be included in the Personal Accident Insurance Scheme with 24hr cover. This is at a current cost of €5 per pupil, which is included in annual Book-list Extra Costs.**

13. School Holidays and other Closures:

You will receive a list of School Holidays in September each year. Other school closures e.g. a Staff Planning Day, will be notified by letter in advance.

14. Tours and Outings:

Permission is sought from parents before children are brought on a school tour. Usually, you will receive a letter about the tour with a permission slip attached.

If the teacher does not receive the permission slip signed by you, your child will not be allowed to go on the tour.

15. Behaviour:

- ❖ Our school has a comprehensive Code of Behaviour. **You will receive a copy of the School Code of Behaviour in September.*
- ❖ We expect a high standard of behaviour from the children in our school. The children are expected to show respect for each other, for the staff of the school and other adults, and for school property.
- ❖ As new children become familiar with the school, they are also made aware of the school's Rules and Safety Procedures. The children become aware that rules are intended to ensure the safety of all in the school community and that rules and procedures help to make the school a pleasant place to be.
- ❖ In class, each child is expected to do her best, to be attentive and diligent, to present her work with care, and to co-operate with her teacher and with her classmates.
- ❖ In our interaction at school, our motto is:
"Treat others as you like to be treated"
Kindness, tolerance and inclusiveness are continually emphasised.
- ❖ **Countering Bullying Behaviour:** Our school has a comprehensive policy on countering bullying behaviour, intended for the whole school community. The good example shown by adults is vital to the formation of good habits of behaviour among children. As well as outlining procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour, our policy includes positive action towards the prevention of bullying. The school holds a friendship week, drama presentations, workshops and role-play and constantly reinforces the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- ❖ **Mobile Phones:** Pupils are not permitted to have mobile phones switched on or to use them on the school premises during the school day. If any girl needs to have a mobile phone to school with her, it must remain in her schoolbag. If you wish to

contact your daughter for any **urgent** reason, please use the school telephone number.

16. Homework:

School Policy recommends the following approximate times to be spent on homework:

Rang 2:	20-30mins
Rang 3:	30-40mins
Rang 4:	40-50mins
Rang 5&6:	50-60mins

If they have worked hard at school, children should not be expected to spend longer at homework than these recommended times. If your child has difficulty with homework or regularly cannot complete it in the recommended time, please inform her teacher.

Homework will include Reading, Spelling, Tables or other learning work, Maths, and perhaps a written exercise in English or another subject area. Written work will always have been well prepared at school. Maths homework will be consolidation of concepts or computation being studied at school. In higher classes, some home research and project work may be required from time to time.

17. How you can help at home:

- ❖ Check your child's homework each day.
- ❖ Help her, but do not do the work for her.
- ❖ Make sure that homework is done at a table or desk, without distractions nearby.
- ❖ Ensure that written work is neat and presentable.
- ❖ **Homework Reading:**
Allow your child to read aloud for you. Do not pressurise her about any word she does not know. Simply tell her the word and ask her to read the sentence again, perhaps returning to difficult words at the end of the reading session, to see if she remembers them.
- ❖ **Spellings:**
The children are encouraged to learn spelling using the "Look and say, Cover, Write, Check" method which they can do alone. You should only be called to "Ask me my spellings!" when your child has already tested her knowledge of them. The actual writing down of each spelling is a very important part of the learning process.

Outside of Homework time, you can help your child's education at home in many valuable ways.

- ❖ Reading can never be over-emphasised. Read to you child, read with your child, let your child read to you. Surround her with books! Discuss your own reading material with her, and ask her about hers.
- ❖ Games with an educational value are a wonderful fun way of learning e.g. family board-games, jigsaws, puzzles, card games, games requiring strategy and logical thinking etc.
- ❖ Help your child informally, to read the time, to be familiar with coin values and change, to understand halves and quarters. Such knowledge will help her Maths education.
- ❖ Monitor I.T. use. Ensure that some of your home software has a real educational value. Don't allow too much inactive screen watching.
- ❖ Monitor television watching. Set limits on viewing time.
- ❖ Ensure that regular exercise is part of your child's life.
- ❖ Lastly, school-going children need a regular sleep-pattern and early nights!

Míle buíochas, for taking the time to read this introduction to Belgrove Senior Girls' School. Céad míle fáilte romhaibh agus roimh d'iníon go dtí ár scoil. We are delighted to welcome you and your daughter to our school. We wish your daughter success and happiness, during her years in Belgrove.

Mrs Anne McCarthy
Príomhoide

Meitheamh 2011