

MATT TALBOT NURSERY SCHOOL



**'Happy at Play,
Learning all Day'**

“Happy at Play, Learning all Day”



Welcome to Matt Talbot Nursery School



Dear Parents

Your child is starting school for the first time and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for choosing Matt Talbot Nursery School.

On behalf of the entire Nursery staff and myself, I would like to extend a warm welcome to you.

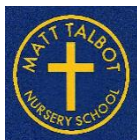
Our school is a happy and friendly place. As you know, children learn through play and we provide a varied curriculum, in line with the Department of Education Pre-School Curriculum Guidelines, set in a safe, happy and stimulating learning environment where your child can develop and progress whilst learning to mix with other children. Matt Talbot Nursery Staff always work to establish a happy, positive and supportive relationship with parents involving them in all aspects of school life. The school operates an open door policy where parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns regarding their child's welfare.

By the time children start Nursery, they have already had a variety of experiences and developed in a number of ways. To build upon the learning that has taken place in the home and its immediate environment, nursery staff aim to provide children with a rich variety of challenging play activities and other experiences in a stimulating environment. The focus is to allow children to learn at their own pace, gain a positive image of themselves as learners, be able to cope with uncertainty and to learn through trial and error.

We hope that in reading this booklet you will appreciate the value of a good Nursery education and that you will give us your support and co-operation throughout the year.

Yours faithfully

Mrs. Carole McStravick
Principal



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Belfast
BT12 7HS

Phone: 02890321997

Email: matttalbotnurseryschool1@hotmail.co.uk

Web: www.matttalbotnurseryschool.co.uk

PRINCIPAL: Mrs. Carole McStravick

Teachers: Mrs. Carole McStravick
Mrs. Susan Magee

Nursery Assistants: Miss Cathy Claxton (NVQ Level 3)
Mrs. Joanne Brennan (NVQ Level 3)
Mrs. Deirdre Mc Conway (NNEB)
Mrs. Ciara Smith (NVQ Level 3)

Secretary: Mrs Sharon English
Caretaker: Mr Michael Anderson

Board of Governors

Name	Status
Mrs. Carole McStravick	Principal
Mrs. Susan Magee	Teacher / Staff Rep
Mr. John McBride	Chairperson / Education Authority
Mrs. Eileen Harte	Vice Chairperson/Secretary
Mrs. Grainne McConnell	Trustee
Mrs. Riognach Doherty	Trustee
Mrs. Elaine Cosgrove	DENI Rep

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Matt Talbot Nursery School Mission Statement
Happy at Play - Learning all Day

The staff at Matt Talbot Nursery School have a strong belief in the importance of Nursery education. We believe that children of all abilities are deserving of the best possible educational opportunities so that their emotional, social, physical and spiritual needs are developed to their full potential. We endeavor to create an environment where the catholic ethos is reflected in the actions of all those within the Nursery ensuring that time is given each day to greet children, parents and visitors and discuss any issues.

Such a goal will only be achieved when the school operates as a cooperative unit, making effective use of all members of the school community. This would ensure that growth takes place through example and instruction, with pupils, staff, parents, outside agencies and governors united in a shared sense of purpose and direction - working together for the children.

Working together the Nursery team will continue to build an enthusiastic, excited learning environment in which children will learn to the best of their ability in a purposeful, secure, well ordered Nursery School where expectations of all the community are high.

General Aims of the School

It is our aim to establish Matt Talbot Nursery School as a catholic school with a deep commitment to catholic education. We hope to foster a catholic ethos which encourages children to love and honour God and to have respect and consideration for others.

Our Nursery School hopes to provide opportunities for children to use their own initiative in playing with materials in a carefully structured situation to help them make discoveries, experience success, grow in self- confidence and independence and to develop a good self-image.

We wish to foster close partnerships with parents thus providing a relaxed and caring environment in which each child will be able to develop his/her full potential.

We cherish all our children and wish to make their time in nursery school a happy, exhilarating and fulfilling experience for them this laying down a solid basis for their more formal primary education.

THE STAFF

The staff will:

- work with a spirit of co-operation, treating each other courteously
- act as role models exhibiting Christian attitudes and values
- strive to create a happy working environment wherein children feel secure
- help children to develop a positive self-image
- offer praise, encouragement and support
- listen
- be fair and consistent with respect to behavior management
- adhere to the behavior management policy, with all members taking responsibility for good standards of behavior
- help children to develop consideration and respect towards each other
- help children share their work and celebrate personal achievement and
- work in partnership with parents.

THE CHILDREN

We will ensure that children:

- feel welcome, secure and accepted as unique individuals
- are valued
- experience Christian attitudes, values and good example of the adults
- are treated fairly and consistently
- are treated courteously and their ideas respected
- are listened to
- develop positive views of themselves
- are supported by the adults
- co-operate, share and work together
- develop consideration for others and treat each other with kindness and consideration and
- have fun and enjoy their play.

PARENTS

We will ensure that parents:

- are treated courteously, feel welcome and are shown respect and consideration
- are aware of the value of their role in their children's education and are treated as equal partners
- understand that the unique contribution which they make to their children's education is valued
- recognise that they have a shared responsibility with respect to the children's religious education
- share relevant information with the child's class teacher
- value the children's work and celebrate personal achievement
- receive all relevant information concerning the nursery school
- have access to all policies pertaining to child protection
- become involved in the life of the school through voluntary help, fund raising, participating in the parents' committees and attendance at all school functions and
- be respectful to all staff at all times.

THE HOME, SCHOOL AND PARISH

The commitment and support of our parish is integral to the effective organisation of the school.

Thus we will:

- ensure that our parents experience the catholic ethos of the school through caring, prayer and participation in religious ceremonies
- promote the education and faith development of children
- work with the chaplain in the celebration of our faith through pastoral visits, religious services and special celebrations of the Eucharist
- fostering a caring attitude through fundraising events for charities
- encourage the active participation of the chairperson of the Board of Governors in order to ensure that Matt Talbot Nursery School gives of its best
- welcome both pastoral visits and participation of the members of the Board of Governors.

SETTLING IN

Our aim is to make the transition from home to Nursery School as happy and stress-free as possible; therefore the settling in period is a very important time for your child. Since it is vital that we establish a good relationship with each individual child, children are admitted gradually (over a period of four weeks).

We feel it is important that time is taken to settle a child into Nursery so they gain confidence and trust in the staff. Settling your child will be a gradual process and with your support, hopefully a happy experience. The settling-in period should not be rushed, all children are different and will settle at their own pace. Sometimes children settle very quickly but it takes a little longer for parents. Please don't worry if your child takes a long time to settle. Each child is unique and reacts differently to their first experience of Nursery school. Over the summer months it might be helpful to encourage your child to stay with grandparents or other family members for short periods of time.

Settling In Timetable: 2024-2025

Wed - 28/08/24 Thurs - 29/08/24 Fri - 30/08/24	Short meet and greet sessions. Small groups of children at a time each accompanied by an adult will have a 45 minute slot to come into the nursery. This gives the children opportunity to meet the staff, play in the classroom and this also gives the parent an opportunity to ask any questions or raise concerns that they may have.	
Week 1 & 2	9am - 10.30am	11am - 12.30pm
2 nd - 6 th Sept 9 th - 13 th Sept	Group 1	Group 2
Week 3: 16 th - 20 th Sept	9am - 11am (all children)	
Week 4: 23 rd -27 th Sept	9am - 12.30pm (all children) Dinner Routine Begins this week	
30 th September	Full school day Drop off - 9am-9.10am Flexible pick-up 1.15pm-1.30pm	

EARLY BIRD CLUB

The school will be running an early bird club from 16th September. The early bird club will start at **8.15am and run until 9.00am** when school starts. Children will be provided with a healthy snack of pancakes or toast during this time. **The early bird club is limited to 13 children and places will be offered on a first come first served basis. Priority will be given to working parents.** The early bird club will **cost £20 per month and must be paid at the beginning of each month via the school money app.** Those wishing to avail of this service should speak to Mrs. McStravick.

ARRIVALS AND COLLECTIONS

Start time 9am-9.10am

Home time 1.15pm-1.30pm

The school doors will be opened between 9am and 9.10am and the children will be greeted by a member of staff. Please be on time, as arriving after 9.10am will take the staff away from the activities that they are already engaged in.

All children must be brought and collected from the Nursery by an adult. For your child's safety, always tell us who is collecting your child especially if it is someone unknown to us. We will not send your child home with a stranger.

We operate a **flexible pick up time over 15 minutes**. This takes away the congestion of all the parents arriving together. Parents at pick up time will come into the nursery, collect their child from the classroom and be responsible for gathering the child's coat and any letters/artwork etc. from the child's box.

All children should be collected promptly.

Please let us know of any special circumstances where an individual is not allowed to collect your child. **It is a legal requirement that no child should be brought to school or collected by anyone under the age of sixteen.**

Please Note

It is very important that the children are both brought to and collected from the school on time so that there is a minimum of disruption during class time.

NO DOGS ARE ALLOWED ON THE SCHOOL PREMISES.

NO SMOKING ON THE SCHOOL PREMISES.

PLEASE DON'T USE YOUR PHONE WHILST COLLECTING YOUR CHILD.

Remember - unforeseen events do happen. If you are going to be late or someone else is coming, please contact us on **02890321997**. **Please put the school number in your mobile.**



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SCHOOL MONEY

Matt Talbot is a cashless school, we use 'Edu spot' banking. Each family logs on and has their own password, all dinner money, early bird and school fund etc. has to be paid via this app. The staff will help you activate this in September.

We ask for a **£5.00** contribution per week for the school fund. This **must** be paid promptly **and can be paid weekly or monthly.**

DINNER MONEY

Dinners will be provided for the children each day at a cost of £2.50 per day. If you believe that you are eligible for free meals you must complete the free meals form which is available from the school. It is vital that the form be completed before dinners start in the nursery, as until the nursery receives notification you will have to pay for the dinners.



WEEKLY CHARGES

- **Dinner Money is £12.50 per week**
(This is subject to change)
- **School Fund is £5.00 per week**
(Not £1 per day)

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ENCOURAGING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR AT NURSERY

In the Nursery, discipline is viewed as an awareness of and respect for the needs and rights of all, and as such, can be seen as an integral part of the curriculum.

At all times, the staff aim to be consistent, fair and firm in their responses to the children. While it is made clear to the children that negative and unsociable behaviour is unacceptable, more time and emphasis is placed on the praise and reinforcement of positive behaviour, thus raising the child's self-esteem and promoting self-discipline.

All children have the right to play in a safe, orderly environment. In order to provide this, we ask for your support in consolidating our policy of positive behaviour when children are at home.

In the Nursery we encourage children to follow these simple rules:

- We listen to the adults and do as we are asked.
- We use our walking feet inside the nursery.
- We have kind caring, sharing hands and feet.
- We use kind caring and sharing words.
- We are careful with our toys and all help to tidy up.

Positive Behaviour Management is part of the school curriculum. If a child behaves in a way which could hurt themselves or others and disrupts the play:

- The teacher will take the child aside and explain why a particular action is not allowed in the nursery.
- The child may be removed from his/her chosen activity and redirected to another area of play.
- If the unacceptable behaviour persists, the teacher will consult with the parent and they will work together to alleviate the problem.

Matt Talbot Nursery operates a zero tolerance policy towards violence



**We have kind, sharing
and caring hands in
Matt Talbot Nursery
School**



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Matt Talbot Nursery School Aims

We believe that all children are 'special' and should be valued as individuals.

We hope that by the end of their time with us, the children will have developed a whole range of skills.

We hope that they will:

- be more independent
- be able to talk confidently to children and staff
- show a willingness to listen
- begin to develop social awareness, to share, to take turns and to value others
- be curious, have gained knowledge and experience of the world in which they live
- develop an ability to concentrate, to persevere and to follow through an activity
- look forward to their new school with confidence.

The Nursery Curriculum

Our curriculum is guided by the various publications produced by the Department of Education and the school is inspected by the Department's Education and Training Inspectorate to ensure high standards are maintained.

Pre-School children and underage children follow a different curriculum in the Nursery in line with ETI recommendations. This allows for progression throughout the academic year/s. Each child is encouraged to progress at their own stage of development through a curriculum which has been carefully designed to meet the children's physical, social, emotional and cognitive needs. In order to do this we provide a wide variety of progressive play situations in a stimulating and challenging environment. Our programme is both broad and balanced and allows the children to make independent choices. It provides them with opportunities to develop the learning associated with:



PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Children develop confidence and independence, show appropriate self-respect and are able to establish effective relationships with other children and with adults. Children develop sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others. They learn to treat living things, property and their environment with care and concern.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT



Children learn to listen and respond to stories, songs, nursery rhymes and poems. They make up their own stories and take part in role play with growing confidence and talk about these experiences. They learn that words and pictures carry meaning. They begin to associate sounds and patterns in rhymes with syllables and music. In their writing they use pictures, symbols, familiar words and letters to communicate meaning. Some children learn to recognise and write their own names.



EARLY MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Children learn mathematical language to describe number, shape, space, size and quantity, pattern, sequencing/time and relationships. As children engage in indoor and outdoor play activities, they use their own everyday language to talk about mathematical concepts. With the skillful help of staff they will begin to understand, and later use, mathematical language as they develop an awareness of number, order, shape, space, size and quantity, pattern, sequencing/time and relationships. Children are encouraged to become problem solvers and they explore various activities.



THE WORLD AROUND US

Children learn about where they live, their families and past and present events in their own lives. They learn about nature and the environment. They are encouraged to plan, predict and talk about their experiences as they discover the world around them. Children enjoy using their senses to investigate and explore indoor and outdoor world. They are given the opportunity to use a range of technological devices such as smartboard, iPad, beebot, listening centre etc. to develop a range of skills and enhance their learning.



PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Children begin to move confidently and imaginatively with increasing control and coordination developing an awareness of space and others. They use a variety of small and large equipment and climbing and balancing apparatus to develop a variety of skills. Children handle tools and objects safely and appropriately as fine and gross motor skills develop.



THE ARTS

Children are encouraged to explore sound, colour, texture, shape, space and imagination using a variety of mediums. They respond in various ways to what they see, hear, smell, touch, feel and imagine. They are given opportunities to listen, observe, discuss and move whilst participating through art, music, dance, drama, stories and imaginative play.

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A CHILD LEARNS FROM EXPERIENCE

Therefore it is the aim of Matt Talbot Nursery School to give your child as many experiences as possible beyond the nursery. These include visits to local parks, libraries, fire station, farm, museum summer outings etc. The money from school funds enables us to do this.

Other areas that enhance our curriculum are:

- Circle Time
- Primary Movement
- Heart Smarts
- 1, 2, 3 Dental Project
- Media Initiative Programme
- Recycling
- Organic garden
- Mini Mindful Explorers
- Music sessions with Karen Diamond (music therapist)
- Visits from the Ulster Orchestra
- Sonal Sportz - football and athletic skills
- Jump, Jiggle and Jive - Music and dance sessions
- Body and Mind



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PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR NURSERY

The following ideas will help build confidence in your child for starting Nursery:



- Familiarise your child with his/her teacher's name.
- Talk about the type of experience he/she is likely to encounter - point these out in programmes, books, toyshops etc.

- Try to offer similar experiences at home, let him/her play with water - i.e. water in the garden, bath, dolls, blow bubbles, sail boats, fill and empty plastic containers. Talk about rolling up sleeves and wearing an apron to keep dry and staying safe by not throwing or drinking the water.



- Make play dough and use it to make shapes, buns, animals etc.
- Teach and sing simple rhymes and poems with you child



- Read books, even join the library where you can borrow books for free. A good starting point would be the Traditional Fairy Tales: Cinderella, 3 Little Pigs, 3 Billy Goats Gruff, Little Red Riding Hood etc.
- Encourage your child to draw, paint and use scissors.

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Teach your child to flush the toilet after use and to wash and dry their hands,

- Teach your child to blow their own nose and dispose of tissue in the bin.
- Encourage your child to tidy up and care for his/her personal belongings.
- Teach your child to put on/take off their own coat and shoes.
- Show your child how to sit at the dinner table and use a knife and fork, sit together at meal times.



RECORD KEEPING AND ASSESSMENT

The staff will assess and make regular observations about your child, their progress and their future needs which they will discuss with you whenever appropriate. We use photographs, individual comments and make judgements about your child within the group.

Early identification of children's particular needs leads to appropriate intervention, assessment and planning for their early year's education and involvement of parents/carers in the child's progress.

The staff acknowledge and appreciate that parents are the child's first educators and encourage the sharing of information. There are usually two formal Parent's Meetings each year when you can come and discuss your child and their progress, but if you have any concerns, the staff will always make themselves available at a mutually convenient time.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

We aim to keep you informed about what is going on in the nursery school:

- holidays
- special events
- outings

We do this through:

- monthly newsletter
- parent's notice board
- displaying the children's work
- photographs of the children at play
- Seesaw app.
- school website: www.matttalbotnurseryschool.co.uk
- coffee mornings

THE NURSERY UNIFORM

The children wear a navy blue sweatshirt with the school logo, a yellow polo shirt and either navy tracksuit bottoms or a navy skirt. The uniform is comfortable, practical and warm.

Your child also needs to bring a coat to school each day, as outdoor play is a valuable part of the nursery curriculum.

We ask that all coats and sweatshirts be labelled with your child's name.

- In the interest of health and safety we ask that jewellery is not worn to school.
- To encourage independence please buy Velcro shoes for your child.

Nursery uniforms can be purchased from:

TRULY FARE
483 Falls Road
Belfast
Tel: 90236374



SCHOOL TRIPS AND VISITS

We aim to give your child as many first hand experiences as possible during their time in nursery. Trips and visits are organised for the children to link in with the themes undertaken.

These trips and visits are always organised with your child's safety in mind.

Our visits/events may include:

- Pumpkin Patch
- Wee Critters
- Music Therapy
- Community PSNI
- 4 Seasons Park
- Trips - Falls Park/Lady Dixon
- Ulster Orchestra
- Dentist
- Story Telling Sessions & visits to Whiterock Library
- Ambulance Service
- Fire Station
- Dance and music sessions with Jump, Jiggle and Jive
- Gathering Drums

Please ensure that you have signed all the consent forms for trips/walks//photographs/videos etc. for the school year.

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CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

We take child protection very seriously. The designated teacher for child protection is Mrs. Carole McStravick, deputy designated teacher for child protection is Mrs. Susan Magee and deputy designated nursery assistant is Mrs. Ciara Smith. We have a comprehensive policy on child protection, which is available to all parents. A summary has been provided for your information.



INTIMATE CARE POLICY

We encourage children to be as independent as possible and by nursery age the majority of children should be completely independent in toileting routines. However we appreciate that accidents do sometimes happen and on these occasions a member of staff will assist the child in changing themselves. If a child gets distressed or we feel that we don't have the facilities to help the child adequately then we will telephone the parent. In the event we are unable to contact the parent we will provide the best care we can for the child.

If your child has been changed for any reason during the nursery day you will find their clothes placed in a plastic bag on their peg when you come to collect them along with a note explaining why. Should you have any queries please discuss with class teacher.

ILLNESS



In line with guidance from the Health and Safety Agency:

- If your child has diarrhea or an upset stomach please allow 48 hours for recovery.
- If your child has been prescribed medication then ensure that he/she remains at home for the first two days of the course of medicine.
- In the case of chicken pox your child must remain at home until all of the spots have dried up.
- If you feel that your child is not well enough to play outside, then please do not send them into nursery.

If your child is ill please inform the school (02890321997) and keep them at home. School is hard work for children and they need to be well to engage in everything they are required to do throughout the school day. Please be considerate of staff and other children.