

November 11th, 2021

Dear Parents,

As part of our ongoing commitment to school self-evaluation and as part of our overall literacy plan we are targeting **Spelling** this academic year. Despite the level of technological aids available to students they still need to develop a conscious awareness of the logic that guides spelling at the level of *sound* and the level of *meaning*. The correlation between spelling and reading comprehension is high because both depend on proficiency with language. The more deeply and thoroughly a student understands a word, the more likely he or she is to recognise it, define it, spell it and use it appropriately in speech and writing.

Spelling is a skill acquired in developmental stages:

Junior Infants to First Class can generally be regarded as being in the second stage of development where they are developing their phonological awareness, learning the alphabetic principle, how to make letters, the direction of writing on a page, consonant and short vowel *sounds*, consonant blends and digraphs. They learn to represent phonemes (units of sound) with letters and joyfully use invented spellings as they attempt to write words eg “Sam and Looc ar mi best frendz.”

Moving up through the next three stages you will see children making more accurate attempts in their spelling. Their proficiency in spelling increases as their understanding of frequent letter patterns, spelling rules, word beginnings and endings, and origins of words develops. All of this knowledge and understanding will be applied in reading and writing-**they are interdependent skills**. Fostering an interest in the actual words your children encounter and playing word games helps them to enjoy this aspect of learning and consolidate literacy skills.

To recap; spelling is developmental and relies on *phonology* (how words sound), *sight* (how words look in print or writing), *morphemes* (how words are constructed from meaningful elements) and *etymology* (the origin of words).

By targeting spelling we are hoping to further develop word knowledge and understanding while explicitly teaching developmentally appropriate strategies for children to use in independent writing. We will encourage children to work through their spelling attempts, identifying and rectifying their own errors.

How can you help you child with spelling Please allow a few extra minutes to engage with your child about the words they are learning each week in both English and Irish; encourage children to say the word aloud so they can hear the sounds and syllables, perhaps helping to look for words in a word-search, making up clues about a word, helping your child notice patterns or having them explain what the prefix (eg. auto) means and thinking of more examples. Encourage your child to stick with the “**Look, Say, Trace, Cover, Write and Check**” method especially for new and tricky word. The process of independently checking a spelling, letter by letter is important for retaining the shape of the word in the child’s visual memory.

Please refer to the **padlet** link below which will be posted on the school website also for some stage-appropriate ideas for spelling practice at home.

<https://padlet.com/jeancarroll/6lm34nb15x6zsff5>

Many thanks for your continued support.

Ms. Aideen Kennelly and Ms. Jean Carroll

Glossary

The children learn these spelling terms as part of their spelling instruction. This may help you when supporting them with their writing and/or spelling homework.

Junior Infants to First Class

Phoneme: Unit of sounds. Sounds can be represented by 1 or more letters e.g. b, m, sh, air

Cat has 3 phonemes c-a-t

Fish has 3 phonemes f-i-sh

Rhyming: Words which have the same sounding ending e.g. *man, can, plan* or *catch, match* or

Syllables: Beats in a word e.g. *come, par-ty, Fa-mi-ly*

Second-Sixth Class (above list plus;)

Prefix: Added to the start of a word and also alters the meaning e.g. *impossible, disagree*

Suffix: Added to the end of a word e.g. *playing, eventually*

Synonym: A word that means the same as given word e.g. happy, glad

Antonym: A word with an opposite meaning to the given word e.g. joyful, miserable

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