

June 2024

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We have decided to update the original FAQ document which was published in January.

Any parents who do not have English as a first language or who may not be familiar with the Irish Education system and need further explanation can contact info@claremorrisns.ie or principal@claremorrisbns.com

General FAQs

What is an amalgamation?

An amalgamation is when two or more schools join together to create one new school.

Why is an amalgamation happening?

A survey was sent from both schools to the parents asking if they would be in support of a co-educational school and 90% of parents from both schools were in favour.

When is the amalgamation happening?

The amalgamated school is due to open in September 2024.

How will it work?

The new school will be made up of staff from the existing schools. It will operate from the two current campuses.

Who will run the new school?

Grace Burke (Principal of Scoil Mhuire gan Smál) has been appointed as Principal. Ciarán Murray (Principal of Claremorris BNS) has been appointed as Deputy Principal. Permanent teaching, SNA and ancillary staff will remain the same. Malachy Molloy is the single manager and will run the school until a new Board of Management is elected.

Parent FAQs

How will the amalgamation affect my child?

From September, all classes will be co-educational (a mix of boys and girls). They will be taught the same curriculum. The newly amalgamated school will benefit from the expertise of two staff teams combined as a single school, operating from two sites. For the 24/25 school year, classes from Junior Infants to 4th class will be located on the Scoil Mhuire gan Smál Campus. 5th and 6th class will be located on the Claremorris B.N.S campus.

How will classes be organised?

Co-educational classes will be created from the existing classes taking into consideration class size, gender balance, individual learning needs and social dynamics. Friendships will be taken into consideration. Management will consult with teachers on the creation of these classes. Children will have the opportunity to identify friends with whom they would like to share a class.

What uniform will be worn?

In order to be cognisant of the financial burden on families, it was decided at a meeting of the Steering Group that a new uniform would be phased in. The students can wear the current uniforms of the schools when they return to school in September 2024. The uniform for the incoming junior infants will be a navy tracksuit and yellow polo neck t-shirt.

What will the name of the new school be?

The new school will be called Claremorris National School (Claremorris N.S)

What will be the start and closing times?

It was decided that both campuses should have the same opening time. We will facilitate a time for drop off to both campuses. School will start at 9am. Children will be supervised from 8.50am.

How will the amalgamation affect the formation of classes?

All classes will be fully co-educational in September 2024. For example, sixth class 2024 will comprise of two classes formed from the current fifth classes. Both classes will comprise of a mixture of boys and girls.

How will class sizes be impacted?

Teacher allocation in all primary schools in Ireland is based on the number of pupils enrolled in the school on 30th September of the previous year.

We have had 14 mainstream class teachers allocated for the 2024/25 school year. Our aim is to retain the lowest numbers possible in each class. Classes will have to be split to achieve this. Classes are as follows:

Junior Infants x 2

Third Class x 1

Senior Infants x 2

Third/Fourth Class x 1

First Class x 1

Fourth Class x 1

First/Second Class x 1

Fifth Class x 2

Second Class x 1

Sixth Class x 2

What will the lunch times be?

This is yet to be confirmed.

Will both campuses have hot school lunches?

Claremorris BNS introduced hot school lunches in Term 3 of the 2023/24 school year. We are working to extend that to the full school for September 2024, however, this has not yet been confirmed.

How will current book lists be impacted?

We are currently consulting with staff to decide on new schemes of work. The school will purchase the books from funding provided by the Department of Education. Parents/guardians will receive a stationery list of items that they will have to purchase.

What will happen the Parents Association?

A new Parents Association will be formed for the new school.

Who will the secretary and caretaker be in September?

Current staff, Tara in Scoil Mhuire gan Smál and Katherine in Claremorris B.N.S (secretaries) and Barry (caretaker) will remain in situ. Discussions on their roles and the administration of the newly amalgamated school will be held in due course.

What do I do if I wish to enrol my child in September 2024?

Enrolment for September 2024 should be made through www.claremorrisns.ie.

Staff FAQs

How will current initiatives be impacted?

Both school Principals will review initiatives and programmes such as - Primary Maths Curriculum, SSE, JEP, Green Schools etc. For now, both schools will continue as they are but will also incorporate a view to the amalgamation as best they can. Management from both schools are collaborating to make the transition as smooth as possible.

What will be the online platform through which the schools connect?

Google and Aladdin - both schools will operate email, contacts, calendars, resources, planning through Google and continue to use Aladdin as normal around parental connections, absences etc. There will be one Aladdin account for the newly amalgamated school. Email addresses will comprise of first and second name @claremorrisns.ie

How will the amalgamation impact staffing arrangements?

<https://www.into.ie/help-advice/other-school-matters/amalgamation/staffing-in-amalgamated-schools/>

What will happen to the Boards of Management?

The existing Boards of Management remain responsible for the management of their own schools up to the 31st August 2024. Co-operation between the Boards and the manager (Malachy Molloy) is expected throughout the amalgamation process.

Who are the Steering Group?

The Steering Group is made up of stakeholders from both schools.

Scoil Mhuire gan Smál: Peter Mc Callig (Chairperson), Grace Burke (Principal), Siobhán Walsh (Deputy Principal), Sophia Sheridan, Melissa Rilot, Loretta Connolly, Danny McHugh, Lorella Pienaar

Claremorris B.N.S: Colman Warde (Chairperson), Ciarán Murray (Principal), Orla Henry (Deputy Principal), Fr. Peter Gannon, Lisa Dillon, Brendan Walsh, Michelle Cosgrove, Carmel Mc Tighe

Thanks to all Steering Group members for their involvement in the amalgamation process.