

‘Together We Can Achieve More’

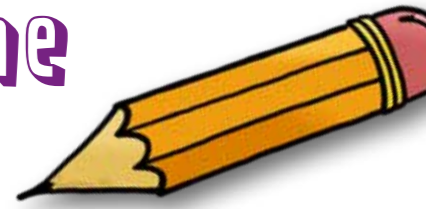
# Knockevin School



[www.knockevinschool.co.uk](http://www.knockevinschool.co.uk)



# Principal's Welcome



Dear Parents,

I am delighted to introduce our prospectus giving you some valuable information about our school. I hope that as you browse these pages you will be able to gather something of our ethos. Here at Knockevin Early Years Centre we are proud of our status as an Inclusion Quality Mark 'Centre of Excellence'. As such, we aim to provide for our pupils a happy, caring, supportive environment where each and every child will have the opportunity to experience holistic education suitable to their age and stage of development.

As a Rights Respecting School we believe that all children have an innate ability to learn, and we aim to nurture and develop this ability, while recognising that pupils have differing learning styles. Our teaching approaches are tailored to meet the individual needs of each child, allowing every pupil to fulfil their full potential.

Knockevin staff are committed to developing positive and supportive links with all our parents and carers throughout their children's school career. Our school motto is "Together We Can Achieve More".



Welcome on board.

**Sara Liddell**

Principal





# A Reassuring Learning Environment

Starting school is a major milestone in the life of a child and we know how anxious our pupils can be. Our staff are committed to working with parents to overcome difficulties and make the transition to school as easy as possible. We offer:

- The sharing of information before a child starts school
- Opportunities for visits and play/social sessions
- Visual supports for pupils
- Information for parents
- A carefully planned induction process in September
- Continuation of opportunities to regularly share information after a child starts school

Once a pupil's place is confirmed school staff will be in touch to make these arrangements.

The first days are all about getting to know our new pupils and allowing them to become familiar with their surroundings. They spend time learning the routine of the school day and are offered opportunities to explore and engage with a variety of new learning opportunities.

## About Knockevin School Organisation

Knockevin is a controlled co-educational school that caters for pupils with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties from the ages of 3-19. Our Early Years Centre, attended by most of our youngest pupils, is in Dundrum. Our largest site is in Downpatrick, and we also have a Senior School in Castlewellan, catering for some of our Post-Primary students. Our catchment area extends to Ballynahinch, Crossgar, Saintfield, Ballygowan, Ardglass, Killyleagh, Newcastle and Dundrum.

Our school sites are equipped with classrooms, therapy rooms, multi-sensory rooms, large multi-functional halls and extensive outdoor play facilities.

Each pupil has a statement of Special Educational Needs and these are annually reviewed with both parents and staff contributing.

Admission arrangements for pupils to enrol in the school are made by the Education Authority.

The main aim of the school is to provide a supportive educational environment where pupils feel secure, at their ease and thrive both educationally, socially and spiritually, achieving their maximum level of independence in preparation for life when they leave school.

### Early Years Centre

Our Early Years Centre caters for some of our youngest pupils at Nursery and Foundation Stage. Pupils attending the Centre enjoy a purpose built school situated in Dundrum, with beautiful views of the Mourne Mountains and Dundrum Bay. Classes in the Centre are named after some of the sea creatures you might find in Dundrum! Pupils at the site experience high quality early intervention, with access to a wide range of supports.

### Knockevin School, Downpatrick

Knockevin School in Downpatrick is presently organised in two departments, Junior and Multi-Disciplinary. They are accommodated in twelve classrooms. The classes take their names from local wildlife and the Mourne Mountains. There is provision for pupils who have additional specialist needs, e.g. physical and sensory needs or pupils who require support with behaviours that challenge. Classes are usually age banded within 2-3 years. Class sizes are small (approximately 8 – 10 pupils) but this varies depending on the individual needs of the pupils in each room. The school benefits from several separate playgrounds, a specialist music room and a hydrotherapy pool.

### Knockevin Senior School

Our Castlewellan site caters for some of our Post-Primary pupils. The school benefits from extensive grounds as well as being well positioned closed to Castlewellan Forest Park. Classes at the site are named after local trees. There is a strong focus on developing life-skills and supporting transition into Post-19 provision.



# A Listening Partnership

Knockevin caters for pupils who present with a diversity of need and we are committed to providing a collaborative working approach to programme planning and delivery. The school recognises the valuable contribution parents make to the education of their children. It is the policy of the school to encourage parental participation in a positive and mutually supportive way. A range of opportunities are incorporated into the yearly school planner which affords parents the opportunity to meet with staff to discuss pupil progress and planning.

After a settling in period, we will, in consultation with parents and therapists, develop Individual Education Plans, which are reviewed every half term.

We believe it is vital to work in partnership to plan programmes, set targets and celebrate success. Teachers use newsletters, the 'See-Saw' app and telephone calls to regularly communicate with parents. We provide ongoing support to families through training, parent meetings and workshops, allowing for the sharing of information and continuity for our pupils.

Every year parents and other professionals are invited to an annual review meeting, to reflect on progress and outline the intended learning provision for the next year.

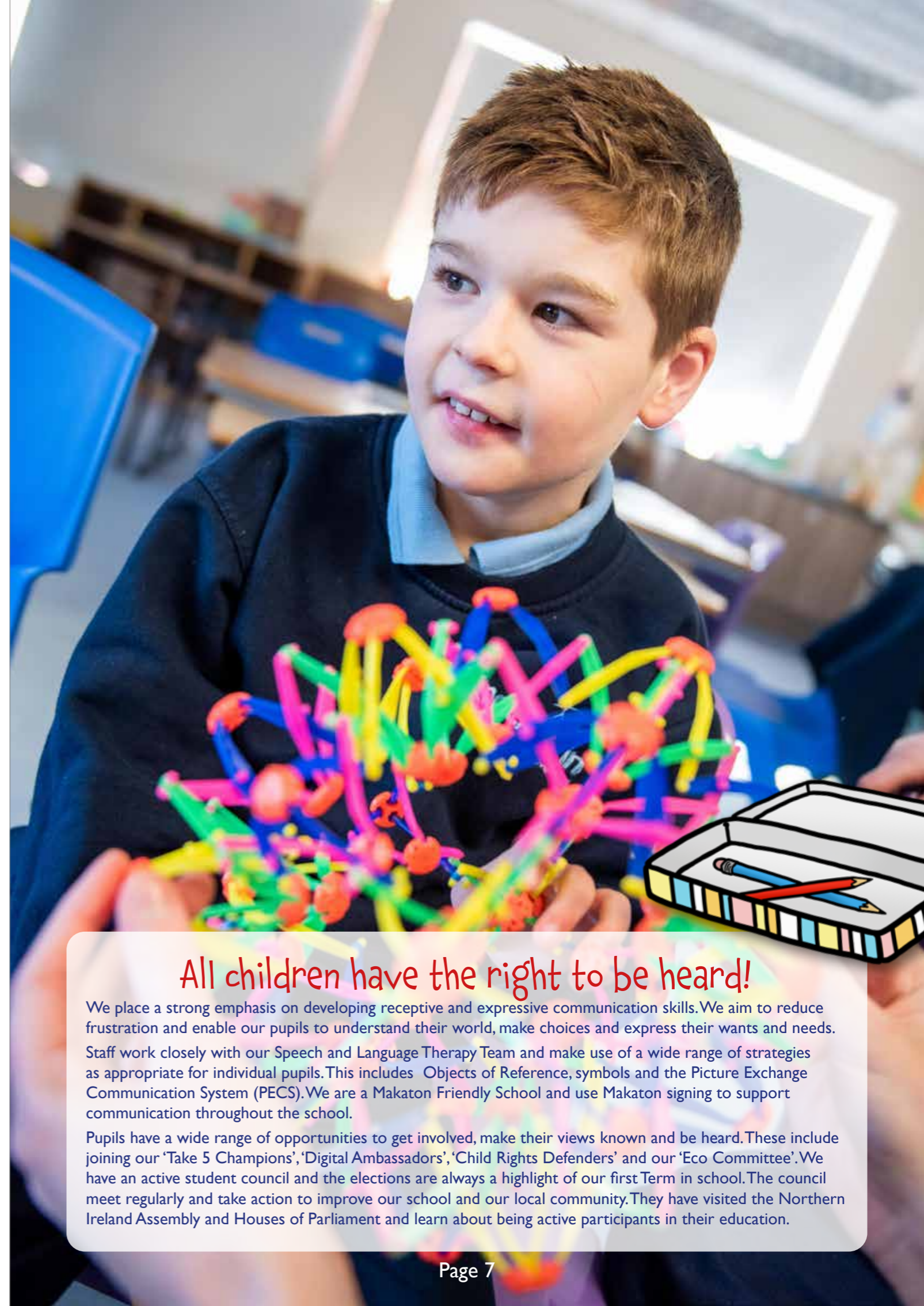
The school motto:

**“Together We Can Achieve More”**

emphasises the importance of good relationships in promoting the aims of the school by all involved in the education of our young people. The school enjoys positive relationships with parents, local schools, businesses, and our wider community.

**We very much welcome and expect parents to inform us of important information which may help us on a daily basis. We also provide an outline of the completed day, through the use of the 'See-Saw' app.**

**Parents are welcome to ring the school at any time, but please remember that as teachers are in class, they will need to return calls outside their teaching hours. Urgent messages can be passed on to teachers in class.**



## All children have the right to be heard!

We place a strong emphasis on developing receptive and expressive communication skills. We aim to reduce frustration and enable our pupils to understand their world, make choices and express their wants and needs. Staff work closely with our Speech and Language Therapy Team and make use of a wide range of strategies as appropriate for individual pupils. This includes Objects of Reference, symbols and the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS). We are a Makaton Friendly School and use Makaton signing to support communication throughout the school.

Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to get involved, make their views known and be heard. These include joining our 'Take 5 Champions', 'Digital Ambassadors', 'Child Rights Defenders' and our 'Eco Committee'. We have an active student council and the elections are always a highlight of our first Term in school. The council meet regularly and take action to improve our school and our local community. They have visited the Northern Ireland Assembly and Houses of Parliament and learn about being active participants in their education.

# A Positive And Supportive Environment

At Knockevin we place a strong emphasis on creating a supportive environment for all pupils. The welfare and safety of pupils is paramount at all times. All staff have a caring, committed sense of responsibility to the personal, social and emotional development of our pupils. Pastoral care is prioritised and we work hard to ensure the safety and well-being of our pupils. Knockevin has strong links with external agencies who support this work including Childline, NSPCC, Action Mental Health and Pets As Therapy. Nurture provision is available for pupils who require additional support, with the aim of providing a safe, predictable and structured space to support pupils emotional and social development.

At Knockevin we recognise the importance of mental health and wellbeing for the whole school community. As a 'Take 5' school, we adopt the "Five Ways to Wellbeing" approach throughout the school. Pupils have access to a wide range of supports including 'Relax Kids' sessions, the 'My Happy Mind' programme and 'Neuronimo'. We achieved the Pieta House flag for Wellbeing and a Gold Award through the Carnegie Centre for Mental Health.

Knockevin is a Gold 'Compassionate School'. Pupils access the 'Educating the Heart' programme designed by Children in Crossfire. We have an Anti-Bullying policy available on request and strongly promote Anti-Bullying messages throughout the school.

All staff are vetted under Education Authority procedures and are trained in Child Protection. They are supported by our safeguarding team, led by the Principal and Designated Teacher for Child Protection. Each campus has a designated safeguarding lead. A summary of our Child Protection Policy is issued annually to all parents. New families will be issued with the Child Protection and Pastoral Care policies (incorporating our policy on Drugs and Discipline). The full Child Protection policy is also on our website or available on request from the school.

Daily contact with school staff enables parents to discuss any problems or concerns. Parents can also contact the Principal, Vice-Principal or Chairperson of the Board of Governors at any time.

# Onwards And Upwards

Families are supported by staff to make decisions about the next steps in each pupil's learning journey. The appropriateness of provision is discussed every year at annual review. From age 14, each pupil has a transition plan, designed in partnership with parents and outside agencies. This plan enables us to support every pupil as they prepare to leave Knockevin and move on to the next stage. We have strong links with Post-19 providers and work closely with them. Pupils and parents are supported at every stage of this process.



# Transport

Every child will be offered transport to and from school. Parents are notified of these arrangements by the transport department at the EA.

Parents must let school know of changes to usual transport arrangements in advance, as we cannot release a child to anyone else without permission.

# Absence/Sickness

Regular attendance is beneficial for a child's confidence, self-esteem, learning and social skills. By attending regularly and punctually children feel secure and have a routine.

Parents are asked to notify school by telephone or in writing if their child is absent from school.

Parents are asked to keep children at home if unwell or infectious. Classrooms are busy and noisy and not the place to be if you aren't feeling well.

Parents are asked to let us know in the morning by telephone if a child is absent.

Pupils may be absent due to hospital appointments. Parents are asked to inform school staff of essential additional information which may be the outcome of hospital visits. If a pupil is hospitalised parents are asked to inform the school.

Parents are asked to keep school staff updated on the condition of any sick child who is unable to attend school. If a child becomes unwell during school, we will make contact with home and ask for them to be collected.

**“Most people see what is, and never see what can be.”**

**Albert Einstein**



## School Hours

Nursery – 2 ½ hours daily

Foundation/KS1 – 9.00am – 1.30pm

KS2 and beyond – pupils stay in school from 9.00 until 3pm from the half-term after their 8th birthday



# The Curriculum

The curriculum at Knockevin is designed to give a broad and balanced education to all children. We deliver the Northern Ireland Curriculum at a pace and level appropriate to the individual needs of each pupil. The themes of the revised NI Curriculum are incorporated as appropriate. The delivery of individual programmes is largely through these general learning areas and much work is achieved through a thematic cross curricular approach which is widely used throughout the school and includes the development of ICT skills and thinking skills and capabilities at various levels. Our focus is always child-centred and responsive to individual needs, with an emphasis on personal and social development throughout the school.

We provide a range of activities that encourage development in all areas, ensuring fun and enjoyment for the pupils while learning.

The programme designed specifically for older students aged 14-19 takes account of the need for a change of emphasis towards a more functional curriculum with a strong vocational element in terms of learning for life and work. There is recognition that in preparing students for post school placement liaising with outside agencies is crucial to effective transition arrangements.

Knockevin is an interdenominational school with strong community support. Religious Education is an integral part of the curriculum. A specific and cross-curricular approach is effectively used and this area of the curriculum is timetabled with assembly taking place each Friday morning. We take part



## Healthy Lifestyles

Knockevin aims to promote a healthy ethos. A healthy snack is prepared in class every morning. A carton of milk is available every day for pupils from Year 1 onwards.

School lunches are eaten in the school hall. Pupils can pay for school dinners or bring a packed lunch. Dinner money must be sent to school on the first day of the week. We encourage healthy choices at lunchtime.

Class programmes include cookery classes that aim to teach skills in independently preparing simple snacks as well as exposing pupils to a variety of tastes and textures. Teachers will ask for a small weekly contribution to cover cookery and snack ingredients.

Knockevin offers a wide variety of physical activity, and all classes participate in 'The Daily Mile', with pupils enjoying a 15 minute run or walk every day. We have facilities such as halls, playgrounds, soft play rooms and a hydrotherapy pool, and some of our older pupils attend specialist activities off-site. These include swimming sessions at Down Leisure Centre, Riding for the Disabled, local gyms and outdoor pursuits. We offer the Duke of Edinburgh Award at senior school level. Through our extensive links we are able to offer a wide variety of activities so there is something for everyone!

# Learning Without Walls

Our outdoor play areas provide opportunities for consolidation of learning and for physical development and movement. We are proud to be an accredited Forest School, with a strong focus on learning outdoors. The playground facilities are very much an extension of our classrooms and our pupils love taking part in activities in a different environment. As an Eco School we use the beauty of the world around us to help us to teach our pupils to respect and protect nature. We go outside in all weathers and use these experiences to enhance learning.

## A School At The Heart Of The Community

Knockevin benefits from extremely strong links in Downpatrick, Dundrum, Castlewellan and beyond! Pupils benefit from our supportive relationship with businesses, churches, sports organisations and others. We participate in Shared Education and additional links with local schools. Senior pupils also access learning opportunities at South Eastern Regional College.

# The Arts



Knockevin School is keen to promote and develop the individual interests and capabilities of all pupils. Throughout the school year opportunities are created which broadens pupils' experiences through and beyond general curriculum learning areas. Art, Music and Drama form an important part of our school life.

We integrate music into daily activities and use it throughout the curriculum. We have a specialist music teacher who takes all classes for music throughout the week. These classes develop a range of skills and knowledge and allow all our pupils to experience and explore sound and instruments and create their own music.

Pupils have the opportunity to play and listen to a variety of instruments such as keyboards, xylophones, classroom percussion and ukuleles. We also use I Pads, music technology and Beamz to develop skills and create our own music. We are very proud of our various music groups including the Rock Band, Samba Band, Melodica Group, Steel Drum Band and our choirs.

There are opportunities to take part in productions and special assemblies. Our senior pupils take part in an annual drama festival and in recent years have performed 'The Tempest' as well as making their own movie of 'A Midsummer Nights' Dream'. We have links with Replay Theatre Company and have benefitted from their specialist productions as well as availing of training and support from them to create our own immersive sensory theatre.

Knockevin has music and drama links with local Post-Primary Schools, allowing our pupils further opportunities to access specialist resources and teaching. We also participate in the Ballynahinch Area Shared Education Choir and have performed with them at a wide range of venues and events.

## ICT

Knockevin is a recognised 'Digital School' and we ensure access to specialist resources to enhance learning including switches, tablets, interactive whiteboards, computers and coding devices. We teach age and stage appropriate messages about staying safe online and maintaining a healthy balance in relation to screen time. Pupils have been actively involved in designing our Internet Safety mascot and the posters that are displayed throughout the school. Parents have access to a range of materials and training designed to support them in relation to Digital Safeguarding and we are a recognised 'Cyber First School'.





# School Uniform

## All pupils wear our uniform:

Navy Sweatshirt – with school logo  
(Royal Blue for Early Years Centre)

Powder blue polo shirt – with school logo

Navy tracksuit bottoms or navy skirt

Navy socks (with trousers) / navy tights (with skirt)

Black shoes – can be school shoes or trainers

A blue checked summer dress with white ankle socks and navy cardigan (girls) or navy shorts below knee length (boys) are optional and can be worn in May/June.

## Our senior school pupils wear a uniform of:

Navy school v-neck knitted jumper with blue trim

School tie

White school shirt

Navy blazer with senior school badge (badge can be purchased separately)

Navy school trousers (boys) or navy school skirt (girls)

Black socks (boys) / navy tights (girls)

Black school shoes

*Girls are permitted to wear navy knee length socks with their skirts in May/June (optional).*

The school uniform can be purchased at Minders or Pricewise, Market Street Downpatrick. All uniform items, bags and towels must be clearly labelled.

A P.E. uniform of navy shorts, powder blue polo shirt and black plimsolls is also needed.

Pupils are asked for changes of clothes, personal care items and swimming gear as required. Swim gear sent to school should include a navy swimsuit / trunks and a towel. Teachers keep parents informed about their timetable and items needed for school.

Pupils are asked to bring a coat every day for outdoor play and walks.



## School Trips and Residential

Pupils in Knockevin have the opportunity to participate in regular educational outings. These outings allow the pupils to use local community facilities whilst reinforcing and generalising work done in class. Outings are used to deliver and extend curriculum learning in practical contexts.

Our older pupils are offered residential outings, for example to the Share Centre in Enniskillen, Dublin and London. School residential trips give pupils the chance to develop a range of skills in a new context and are also a lot of fun!





It is our policy to welcome visitors to our school. To find out more please call to arrange a visit. We look forward to meeting you and your family.

### Knockevin School

33 Racecourse Hill  
Downpatrick. BT30 6PU  
Tel: 02844612167

### Knockevin Senior School

2 Church Street  
Castlewellan  
Tel: 02843 444200

### Knockevin Early Years Centre

46 Main Street  
Dundrum. BT33 OLY  
Tel: 02843 751788

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## I Love Knockevin School because...

"There is art, cookery, horseriding and watching movies. I get to dance and I have fun." Ruby

"I love my teacher, and horseriding, and the classroom assistants, also the dinners." Tasha

"I love cutting and sticking" Daniel

"I get to see my lovely friends and staff." Charlie

"I like playing with the toys." Lucille

"We all learn together as a class. Our school is a happy place." Sean

"I like having homework, art and design, doing English and independent work. The teachers and staff are the best ever." Aaron

"I like to learn different subjects and how to be independent. We go on trips, do music and P.E. The staff make me feel welcome, safe and happy. I like the Principal too." Shannon

"The staff are like a family to me. I feel safe in Knockevin and I'm happy to call everyone my friends." Sarah-Jane



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