St Joseph's Primary School

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Parent Update

21st October 2026

Mid-Term Break
The school will be closed for our mid-term break from Monday 26th – Friday 30th October. School will reopen as usual on Monday 2nd November. We hope you all enjoy a well-earned rest after a very busy first half term.

Hallowe'en Celebrations
Our annual PTA Hallowe'en Disco will take place on Thursday 22nd October. The evening event is for P4-P7 pupils and will start at 6.30pm and finish at 7.30pm. Admission cost is £3 per family which includes a snack and a drink.
The P1-P3 disco will take place on Friday during the school day. We invite all pupils (P1 – P7) to wear their Hallowe'en costumes to school on Friday.

Allergy Aware School
I communicated with all families this week about the need for parents and carers to consider the wellbeing of all pupils when packing snacks and lunches. We have several children in our school community who have severe allergies, and we need everyone to follow guidance carefully to keep them safe. Please check the ingredients on packaging and ensure there are no nuts or nut traces in snacks you send in to school. Do not use spreads such as Nutella or peanut butter and never send nuts or seeds of any kind into school. Thanks for your help and cooperation with this very important matter.

Parent Teacher Meetings
Our Parent Teacher Meetings are scheduled for Friday 27th November 2026. Pupils will not attend school on this day. Your child's class teacher will be in communication with you after Hallowe'en to schedule a time for your appointment. If you have already attended a PLP meeting you do not have to attend an additional meeting on the 27th.

P7 Parent meetings have already taken place and P5B meetings will take place on Wednesday 4th November. Ms McKinney will be in touch with P5B parents/carers with arrangements.

School Open Day & P1 Enrolment
Our annual School Open Morning will take place on ***Thursday 26th November***. This is a wonderful opportunity for new and prospective parents to visit the school on a normal working day and see what we have to offer in St Joseph's. The morning will begin with the Principal's Address at 10.30am, followed by a guided tour of the school and finish at 11.30am. All prospective parents are very

welcome to attend. EA Connect opens for application for Primary 1 places for the 2027/2028 academic year on Wednesday 6th January at 12 noon. The application window closes on Wednesday 20th January at 12 noon.



Communication/Contact Details
It is very important that you keep us up to date with any changes in your address, email or phone number that occur throughout the year. On occasion, we may need to contact you at short notice, and it is vitally important that we have up-to-date contact information to do so. Please contact the office and notify Mrs Warke of any changes: stjoesps@gmail.com or on 028 90 650039
I would also encourage all parents to sign up for the iClass App. Details of how to do this are shared here.

Parking
Parking continues to be a real challenge in and around our very busy campus. As the school community continues to grow, inevitably there is increasing pressure on space, not only in the church car park but in the streets right around the area. Can I ask parents and carers once again to be courteous, to be safe and to respect the laws regarding safe parking. Help us to keep all our pupils safe!

School of Sanctuary Award 2026
St Joseph's was awarded Belfast School of Sanctuary status at a fantastic ceremony in City Hall last week. This means we are officially recognised as a school that is safe, welcoming and inclusive for all pupils. The award ceremony was attended by three of our wonderful pupils, Habel, Omakaree and Kare, who addressed the audience and told them about some of the initiatives that are working successfully in St Joseph's. We are very proud of them, and very proud of the award. My thanks to Mr Wright and Mrs Magee for their hard work towards this over the past two years.



Mobile Phones in Schools Survey
You may remember that we shared communication from the Department of Education last month regarding the use of mobile phones, and other internet connected devices, in schools. The Department of Education are strongly of the opinion that pupils should not have access to these devices during the school day and that is a view shared by the Board of Governors and staff of our school. In response to the guidance provided by the DE in Circular 2026/16 we would like you to have your say as we begin to write our own Mobile Phone Policy. Please engage with us by completing the short mobile phone survey found here. The survey will remain active for 10 days.

Dance With Duffy



Thank you all for your incredible support of our 'Dance With Duffy' fundraiser event last week. It is always a highlight of our school calendar and was a huge success once again. So far, the event has raised around **£6,200** for school funds through our PTA. This money will be invested in outdoor learning projects to benefit the whole school community – more on this to follow. Our thanks to Mrs Duffy for her incredible efforts on the day – I can only imagine the step count after 70 dances!
Remember, you can contact the PTA at any time stjospta@gmail.com

School Development Plan – Our School Improvement Journey

Our School Development Plan is our roadmap to improvement for the next school year and beyond. Our current plan, based on the parent, pupil and staff consultation we carried out in April and May last year, focuses on creating opportunities for developing healthy and active learners, developing learning opportunities beyond the classroom and continuing on our inclusion journey. We have already made significant strides towards achieving some of our goals with the reintegration of the Daily Mile, and achievement of Schools of Sanctuary status. We are also starting the development of our outdoor learning space, The Sanctuary, in the coming week and it will be central to our outdoor learning provision going forward. A pupil friendly summary of our plan can be found below.

Kind regards

Mr C Donnelly

Our School Improvement Journey



St Joseph's Primary School Development Plan 2026-27

Healthy ♥ Active ♥ Curious ♥ Inclusive ♥ Successful

Making our amazing school even better

This year we will work together to help everyone learn, grow, stay healthy and feel included.

Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds

- Review our Healthy Eating Policy.
- Make healthy food choices.
- Develop healthy lifestyles.



Active and Healthy Learners

- Two PE sessions every week.
- More sports and activities.
- The Daily Mile for everyone.
- More after-school clubs.



Learning Beyond the Classroom

- Develop our Outdoor Sanctuary Space.
- More structured outdoor learning.
- Explore nature through hands-on learning.



Learning for Everyone

- Review our World Around Us curriculum.
- Improve Science across the school.
- Link Science with outdoor learning.



A Welcoming School for All

- Achieve Schools of Sanctuary Status.
- Continue our BWDW programme.
- Improve SEN inclusion and access to support.



What This Means for Me

- More time being active and healthy.
- Outdoor learning and new clubs.
- Feeling safe, included and respected.



Be Kind
Be Safe
Be Your Best

We all matter • We all belong • We all try to do our best!

Together we will make St Joseph's even better for everyone!