



St. Joseph's Primary School
42 Castle Street
Lisburn
BT274XE

'Being the best that we can be'

Friday 22 May 2020

Dear staff, pupils and parents,

It is my greatest privilege to introduce myself as the new Acting Principal of St. Joseph's Primary School. This appointment has been somewhat unexpected but I cannot conceal my excitement at such a brilliant opportunity. Already, I have heard such wonderful accounts of the St Joseph's family; the talent of the children, the diligence of the staff and the tremendous input from the parent body. Such positivity bodes well for our journey together. At such an unprecedented time, we will certainly have to rely on each other more than ever before.

I am sure you are curious about who this new Principal is. Well, I have four young children myself, so I understand the challenges, the concerns, the joy we all experience as parents. As teachers, we are fortunate to be entrusted in looking after your children and to share in their many successes. I am originally from rural Co. Tyrone but I have lived and worked in Belfast for over fifteen years now. I have gained great experience in my most recent post in St. Clare's P.S. where I have learned the importance of open communication and engaging with the whole community. Throughout my life, sport has been a constant. I continue to play and coach Gaelic football for my club, St Brigid's, and last year, I even togged out for Antrim Masters - my wife was delighted at that development! My experiences in playing, coaching and watching sport has formed many of the key principles I live by – self-discipline, equality, hard work, togetherness. My career as a teacher has illustrated the importance of providing opportunities for all children to experience a range of activities, across the arts, music, sport and technology.

In my conversations this week, with Mr Murray, Mrs Fleming and Mr Broderick, I have gained some insight into the vibrant atmosphere which exists in St. Joseph's, one that I am keen to build upon. The pursuit of academic excellence is apparent as is the emphasis on the holistic development of each child. I am already excited at the prospect of our first post-COVID-19 music performance, having heard from many people about the talents of the children and their teachers. I have spent many hours over the past week looking at the impressive website and Twitter output, clearly showing a unity of purpose between school and parents in ensuring the highest possible standards for our children. I cannot tell you how much I am looking forward to welcoming everyone back to St. Joseph's. It is my intention to get to know each and every child, each and every family and my door will always be open. With our focus on staying safe, I can only share my virtual presence for now but I look forward to many warm handshakes when it is safe to do so. As a school, we shall endeavour to face these current challenges and continue to provide the best care and education for your children.

May God bless you all and keep you safe,
Mr Barry McMahon



**Shared
Education**



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