

ST. PATRICK'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

Newtownstewart

www.stpatricksnts.com

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September Newsletter 2020 - 2021

Dear Parent / Guardian

On behalf of the Board of Governors and all school staff of St Patrick's PS, I welcome parents and children back to school in this extraordinary year, especially our new pupils and parents. I hope that everyone will have a happy and rewarding year. Thank you everyone for your patience and cooperation with our reopening plans. Hopefully if Covid-19 allows, we will be able to return to some semblance of normality very soon.

As always, our thanks go to Gary & Janice for their cleaning and maintenance over the summer months. They have done a great job in preparing for our return!

Please keep this newsletter for reference - it is also on the school website

www.stpatricksnts.com

School Closings 2020/21

<u>2020</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>No. Days</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>No. Days</u>
September	25 th	1	February	18 th – 22 nd	3
October	26 th – 30 th	5	March	17 th	1
November		0	April	1 st – 12 th	8
December	22 nd – 31 st	8	May	3 rd – 4 th , 24 th – 31 st	8
January	1 st – 6 th	4	June		0

Parent/Teacher Meetings:

Arrangements for P/T Meetings will be explored after Christmas.

The (Covid-19) School Day

9.00-9.15am Surnames A - McG

9.15-9.30am Surnames McI - W

Morning Breaks 10.15 – 10.30am; 10.30 – 10.45am; 10.45 -11.00am *Lunch Sittings* 11.45 - 1.15 pm



Children must arrive at school at the times shown above according to their surname. Pupils may not leave the school grounds during the day without permission. *Late-comers may lose their Break to make up for lost time.*

Absences – Teachers are **required** to input a reason for all absences. Therefore, a note of explanation to the teacher or a phone call from the parent is essential. Parents will be contacted if a reason is not supplied. Attendance registers are marked both morning and afternoon. Please note that Educational Welfare Officers regularly check our attendance records and visit the homes of persistent absentees. Please see the separate sheet '**Miss School = Miss Out**' provided by Educational Welfare Service.



Attendance Certificates are awarded to children who have missed **one day or less in the previous school year(s)**.

School Savings

Savings not given out in the normal way last term will be distributed in the coming weeks.



Due to concerns over the handling of money and visitors entering school to collect the money, the school saving scheme will be suspended until further notice.

School Uniform Navy trousers / track-suit bottoms (Plain navy blue) / skirt / pinafore
Navy tie (*optional*) Navy sweatshirt / sweater / cardigan
Blue shirt / blouse *Jeans/ 'Leggings' may not be worn.*

- Uniform sweatshirts and other schoolwear are stocked by J Kemps & Sons, NTS.
- Pupils will be permitted to wear **one small stud earring** in each ear – no hoops or dangly earrings. **Earrings must be taped for PE.** Please see our Health & Safety Policy (on school website) for more information.
- Mobile phones / smartphones may not be taken to school.



School Dinners School dinners cost **£2.60 a day**; £13.00 per week. **Dinner money MUST be paid in advance.**

St Patrick's is fortunate to have an excellent canteen with a 5-star hygiene rating, staffed by Mrs Sylvia Thompson, Mrs Ann Harkin and Mrs Edel McNulty.

Our school dinners are nutritious, tasty and good value for money. Please encourage your child to take school dinner – it is much better for them than a packed lunch.



Smart Snacks / Healthy Breaks: St Patrick's receives the Smart Snacks Award each year. Only milk, water, fruit, raw vegetables or yoghurt may be taken at Break time. **If taking lunches, no crisps, sweets or fizzy drinks please!** Our filtered, chilled water dispenser is installed in the foyer (with another drinking fountain outside P1) and can be used during non-class time. School water bottles costing £1 can be bought from the secretary – these can be used during class at the teacher's discretion.

Breakfast is considered the most important meal of the day because it is the first meal eaten after an all-night fast. Please ensure your child eats a good breakfast every day. Unfortunately, Breakfast Club is suspended until further notice.

Allergies: Some children in our school suffer from **FOOD ALLERGIES**. The most common food allergy – which can cause severe reactions – is **NUT ALLERGY**. This includes peanuts, cashews, almonds, walnuts, etc. Even the smell of nuts can cause a reaction.



All parents are asked to take care that their children DO NOT bring foodstuffs which contain nuts into school. Please be vigilant as it is not always clear that an item contains nuts. Check the contents on the packaging and if in doubt - leave it out.

Please inform the school of any allergies or other food concerns. Our kitchen staff are happy to talk to parents about any special dietary requirements or concerns. The kitchen phone number is 8166 2436.

Milk & Fruit will be available to children each day. This will start later in September. We will let you know when to start bringing in the money
We cannot give refunds for absences or cancellations.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES



Physical Education Coaching for all classes will start soon (outdoors only).
Tin Whistle / Music / Singing for P4 to P7 children taken by our Music Co-ordinator, Mrs Sheridan has also been put on hold.

***A huge thanks to our Parents' Group for their fund-raising efforts over the years
Please support them in everything they do. ☆☆ New members welcome. ☆☆***

GENERAL INFORMATION - please read carefully.

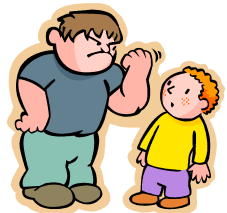
- Pupil Information Form - Please note everyone must complete the pupil information form as it has been amended since last year – we have been informed that medical evidence must be provided for any serious conditions that you might list.

Telephone numbers in case of an emergency are vitally important – keep the school informed of changes to phone numbers (especially mobile phone numbers).

Ensure that the school is aware of **any** special medical, family or social circumstances which might affect your child in school. [*Such information will be treated in the strictest confidence.*]

- Money should not be carried into school in a coat, trouser or shirt pocket. Put it somewhere securely into an envelope with your details written on the outside. The school will not be responsible for money, valuables or other belongings lost by pupils.
- **All sweatshirts (and footwear) must have names on them.** Children must be able to identify their belongings. This applies as much to P7 as P1. Every year staff waste valuable time trying to find missing sweatshirts and shoes. If items are clearly marked with the child's name or initials this won't happen. *A child **may not** take off their sweatshirt during school hours unless their name is clearly marked on it.* Unclaimed clothing or footwear will be kept for one month only. Don't forget to re-mark your child's name if it has washed off. (*Please consider giving unwanted schoolwear items to the school for lending to any child needing a change after a fall, accident, etc.*)

- Let the school know immediately if your child is being bullied. Bullying is never ignored and **will not** be tolerated. **All** allegations of bullying are investigated and parents may be contacted and called to a meeting to discuss their child's behaviour. The school has an Anti-Bullying Policy which is available to parents and is regularly revised. St Patrick's PS records incidents of bullying in the SIMS.net Achievement & Behaviour module.
- We praise and reward good behaviour. Pupil of the Month Awards, birthday treats, exceptional behaviour or good work stickers are only part of our extensive rewards system.



However, if children misbehave to such an extent that the Supervisor or Teacher sends them to the Headteacher or Deputy Head, they will be chastised and may be kept in over Break or Lunchtime. All such incidents of misbehaviour are recorded in SIMS.net and, if serious, letters are generated to inform parents. Rewards and Sanctions are listed in our Pastoral Care Policy.





- Talk and **LISTEN** to your child each day and encourage them in all their activities in school. ***Don't be too critical - emphasise the positive!!*** [*Please don't react immediately to any tales – sleep on it first.*]



- Homework – Again, homework will be different initially and may consist of spellings, reading, tables and some online work. Advice suggests that books should not be moved to and from school. Please ensure your child completes any non-written homework with the same care and attention as they would otherwise. Homework is often the “bridge” between home and school and promotes parent

involvement in the education process. Most classes will have homework from Monday to Thursday.

- Please note that for Health & Safety reasons, we do not permit parents to use the school car park. Parents or taxis should collect their children from the pedestrian gate.
- Parent access to school has had to be suspended for the time being. If you wish to speak to the teacher or Head, they may be available for a brief period after school - teachers cannot take calls during the school day and are needed for school arrival duties in their classrooms each morning. Please let the secretary know if you will be contacting a teacher so that they can be available. For Covid-19 prevention, visitors are also being kept to a bare minimum. 
- It is worrying to note that some children have unsupervised access to internet sites such as Twitter, Facebook, and Youtube etc. Children **may not** post comments on the internet about any aspect of our school, nor may they contact staff through any of these sites.
- **Normally, we would ask you to check your child's school bag each evening for school or teacher notes. We will only send notes home if absolutely necessary, eg. Pupil Information Form. The school web site (www.stpatricksnts.com) contains lots of useful information and is updated regularly.** 

Our text service allows the school to contact parents quickly. It won't work if we don't have your mobile phone number!! Please be aware that only the parent listed as the first contact receives the text.

Similarly, the school Facebook page (search 'St Patrick's PS Newtownstewart') is a great source of information.

Again, thank you for your understanding around the many changes that have had to be made to school this year.

Peter Torney (Headteacher)