

# ST. PATRICK'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

Newtownstewart

[www.stpatricksnts.com](http://www.stpatricksnts.com)

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## September Newsletter 2021 - 2022

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, 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. Unfortunately, with Covid-19 still around, some restrictions/precautions are still in place.

Our thanks go to Patricia & 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](http://www.stpatricksnts.com)

### School Closings 2021/22

<u>2021</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>No. Days</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>No. Days</u>
September	30 <sup>th</sup>	1	February	16 <sup>th</sup> – 18 <sup>th</sup>	3
October	1 <sup>st</sup> , 27 <sup>th</sup> – 29 <sup>th</sup>	4	March	17 <sup>th</sup> – 18 <sup>th</sup>	2
November	1 <sup>st</sup>	1	April	14 <sup>th</sup> – 22 <sup>nd</sup>	7
December	23 <sup>rd</sup> – 31 <sup>st</sup>	7	May	2 <sup>nd</sup> – 3 <sup>rd</sup>	2
January	3 <sup>rd</sup> – 5 <sup>th</sup>	3	June	1 <sup>st</sup> – 3 <sup>rd</sup>	3

### Parent/Teacher Meetings:

**P/T Meetings will take place at Halloween, by telephone or face-to-face if conditions allow.**

### The (Covid-19) School Day

9.00-9.15am Surnames A - McG

9.15-9.30am Surnames McI - W

*Morning Breaks* 10.30 – 10.45am; 10.45 -11.00am    *Lunch* 12.15 - 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.

**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** 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!** We encourage the drinking of plain water – no cordial/diluting please. 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. Alternatively, St Patrick's PS will run a Breakfast Club every morning from 8.15 – 8.55am, cost £1.00 per day (£4.00 per week if paid on Monday) for juice, cereal & a choice of toasts. This begins on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> September.

**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 on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> September. Milk costs £7.00 and fruit is also £7.00 for the term (approx. 11p per day). Money should be sent in a sealed labelled envelope and given to the teacher before Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> September.

*We cannot give refunds for absences or cancellations.*

## **EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

**Physical Education Coaching** – we are hopeful of starting coaching 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 pending further advice from DENI. Violin (at the minute Friday mornings) will be moving to Tuesday afternoons.

***A huge thanks to our Parents' Group for their fund-raising efforts over the years  
Please support them in everything they do. ☆☆ New members needed – the AGM will be held  
at the end of September. ☆☆***

**GENERAL INFORMATION** - please read carefully.

- Pupil Information Form - Please note everyone must complete the pupil information form – 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 vitaly 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. 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 – 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 must insist that no cars enter the school car park at any time of the day. Parents or taxis should collect their children from the pedestrian gate. There should be no parking in the bus zones or on the footpaths. This obstructs the bus and makes it difficult for those crossing the road to have a clear view of oncoming traffic. I thank you for your support in this serious matter.

- Parent access to school has again 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.

- **Please 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](http://www.stpatricksnts.com)) contains lots of useful information and is updated regularly.**



**Our text service allows the school to contact parents quickly with short messages. 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. If you are not signed up to **Seesaw**, please contact us for information on how to join. (New P1 parents will be given instructions by the teacher)

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)