

ST. PATRICK'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

Newtownstewart

www.stpatricksnts.com

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September Newsletter 2023 - 2024

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.

Our thanks go to Janice & Jackie 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 2023/24

<u>2023</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>No. Days</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>No. Days</u>
September	28 th - 29 th	2	February	15 th , 16 th	2
October	30 th , 31 st	2	March	18 th , 28 th , 29 th	3
November	1 st	1	April	1 st - 5 th	5
December	22 nd - 29 th	6	May	6 th - 10 th , 27 th - 28 th	7
January	1 st - 3 rd	3	June	14 th	1

Parent/Teacher Meetings:

P/T Meetings will take place after school in the weeks leading up to Halloween.

The School Day

Start 9.00am Morning Break 10.45 - 11.00am Lunch Sittings 12.15 - 1.15 pm



Absences – Teachers are legally **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 (on School Website).



In the past few years of living post Covid, our school attendance figures have plummeted. High absenteeism undoubtedly affects learning so I would ask that children are only kept away from school when absolutely necessary. It has become a 'thing' for some parents to allow children to be absent on their birthday. This is not an acceptable absence. **When deciding whether or not to allocate additional help to a struggling child EA look at attendance as one of the criteria so poor attendance can have a negative effect in this way also.**

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

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 or removed 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.



Unfortunately, while awaiting notification from EA of Free School Meals, children must pay for their dinner or take 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 4th 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 11th September. Milk costs £10.00 and fruit is also £10.00 for the term (approx. 14.5p per day). Money should be sent in a sealed labelled envelope and given to the teacher before Friday 8th September.
We cannot give refunds for absences or cancellations.

Junior (P1/2) Afterschool club 2.15-3.10pm starts on Monday 4th September. Cost £1.50 for the first child, £1.00 for subsequent children. Primary 1 can begin staying from Monday 2nd October when the full days begin.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Physical Education Coaching – we are hopeful of starting coaching soon. Cost - £1.00 per session. Further details next week.

Tin Whistle / Music / Singing for P4 to P7 children taken by our Music Co-ordinator, Mrs Sheridan will begin these lessons upon her return. All children will require a tin whistle. These can be purchased in the office for £4.00. Violin details will be announced shortly.

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

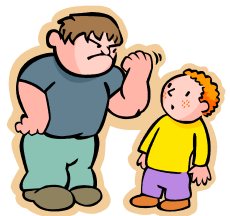
GENERAL INFORMATION - please read carefully.

- 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.*]


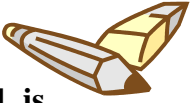
- Money should not be carried into school in a coat, trouser or shirt pocket. Put it somewhere securely into an envelope with your details written on the outside. The school will not be responsible for money, valuables or other belongings lost by pupils.
- **All sweatshirts (and footwear) must have names 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 sign completed homework each night.
- 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 restricted 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. 
- 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) 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.

We look forward to your cooperation and to a happy and successful year for your children.

Peter Torney (Headteacher)