



**St. Joseph's
Primary School**
Slate Street
BELFAST
BT12 4LD

Principal: **Miss. M. Weir** B.ed., M.ed., D.A.S.E, P.Q.H. (N.I.)

Telephone: **90323683**

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope this letter finds you well and that you are enjoying the last of our summer holidays having had the opportunity to recharge before we embark on the new school year. I know some of you and your families have been bereaved or affected by Covid-19 and I want you to know our thoughts and prayers are with you. We can't help but notice that the rate of those being infected by Covid-19 has risen over the last number of days. Consequently, I know you will understand that in order to enable our children to safely return to school, we need to carefully observe the following procedures.

Please find a guide for parents and carers below. This outlines revisions to the school day to help ensure, in as much as possible, everyone's continued safety and wellbeing during these challenging days.

Please note that as a result of the relaxation of social distancing, **ALL** children will now return to full time education on Tuesday, 1st September. As you are aware, St Joseph's had planned for a full school return this term but prevailing circumstances have necessitated the implementation of certain changes since my letter dated Friday, 26th June 2020.

Children should return to school on the following dates during the month of **AUGUST** only. It is essential the times given below are strictly adhered to:

Year group	Return to school date	Start time	Finish time
Year 7 (only) Mr Mc Goldrick	Monday 24 th August	9.00	2.00
Year 7 Mr Fryers	Monday 24 th August	8.45	1.45
Year 6 Mr Mc Goldrick	Wednesday 26 th August	9.00	2.00
Year 6 Mr Perry	Wednesday 26 th August	9.00	2.00
Year 5 Mrs Dawson	Thursday 27 th August	8.45	1.45
Year 5 Miss Barr	Thursday 27 th August	8.45	1.45

Year 4 Mrs McComish	Wednesday 26 th August	8.45	1.45
Year 4 Miss O'Neill	Wednesday 26 th August	9.00	2.00
Year 3 Miss Starrs	Thursday 27 th August	9.00	2.00
Year 3 Miss Kelly/Mrs Lynch	Thursday 27 th August	8.45	1.45
Year 2 Mrs Glackin	Thursday 27 th August	8.45	1.30
Year 2 Miss McCormick	Thursday 27 th August	9.00	1.45
Year 2 Sunshine Room	Thursday 27 th August	9.00	1.45

Please note that Year 1 children have individual start and finish times beginning September 2nd 2020 and throughout the month of September. These details have already been forwarded to parents.

LUNCHES BETWEEN 24TH -28TH AUGUST (INCLUSIVE)

Between the 24th - 28th August, there will be **NO SCHOOL MEALS SERVICE**. During this week therefore, all children are required to bring a packed lunch to school as there will be no canteen services. Free School Meals will begin on Tuesday, 1st September.

FROM TUESDAY 1st SEPTEMBER, OUR SCHOOL TIMETABLE WILL HOPEFULLY BE AS FOLLOWS (ALWAYS SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Year group	Start time	Finish time
Year 7 Mr Mc Goldrick	9.00	3.00
Year 7 Mr Fryers	8.45	2.45
Year 6 Mr Mc Goldrick	9.00	3.00
Year 6 Mr Perry	9.00	3.00

Year 5 Mrs Dawson	8.45	2.45
Year 5 Miss Barr	8.45	2.45
Year 4 Mrs McComish	8.45	2.45
Year 4 Miss O'Neill	9.00	3.00
Year 3 Miss Starrs	9.00	3.00
Year 3 Miss Kelly/Mrs Lynch	8.45	2.45
Year 2 Mrs Glackin	8.45	1.30
Year 2 Miss McCormick	9.00	1.45
Year 2 Ms McAllister Sunshine Room	9.00	1.45
Year 1 Mrs Kearney	8.45	11.45 (initially) 1.30 from Mon 21 st Sept
Year 1 Miss Halfpenny	9.00	12.00 (initially) 1.45 from Mon 21 st Sept

LUNCHES FROM SEPTEMBER ONWARDS

FREE SCHOOL MEALS will begin on Tuesday, 1st September. There will be NO option to purchase a school dinner initially. This is to reduce the need to handle cash in the office. Canteen services will only be provided for children entitled to Free School Meals. For your convenience and in the interests of safety during this pandemic, the school intends to introduce a 'cashless' system which will hopefully enable us not to handle any cash on the school site. Therefore the payment for fruit, milk etc., will all be done Online. This will take a few weeks for us to embed and we ask you to be patient with us.

SCHOOL MEALS, PACKED LUNCHES, BREAKFAST, BREAK AND WATER

Children entitled to free school meals should not bring their own lunch from 1st September as one will be provided for them by EA School Meals. For a period of time dinners will be served in the children's classrooms as the hall will be in use for small group learning. Until we have a cashless system in operation we will not be in a position to provide paid meals.

This, we hope, will be in place during the month of September. Eventually, we intend to use the school hall for meals and will evaluate this over forthcoming weeks.

Children not entitled to Free School Meals should bring packed lunches in a disposable bag which will be disposed of daily. No lunchboxes should be used or brought into school. As we have a number of children with acute nut allergies we adopt a NO NUT policy. We therefore ask parents to ensure children are provided with healthy lunches that **do not** contain nuts.

We will be providing toast for children entering school each morning and fruit at break time. We eat fruit at break time only and this will be supplied by the school, free of charge, during the months of August and September. Again, we will evaluate the continuance of this as we proceed through the year.

Please note each child will be given a disposable cup for water each day.

****PARENTS WE NEED YOUR HELP AND SUPPORT WITH THE FOLLOWING:**

Our pupil's safety continues to be of paramount importance and when we return to school we will adhere to the following Public Health guidance.

- Pupils who present with symptoms must remain at home and adhere to the government's Stay At Home guidance
- Pupils will wash/sanitise their hands more often than usual using hand washing/sanitising facilities for each class
- Pupils will be encouraged to avoid touching their mouth, eyes and nose
- Surfaces that are touched frequently will be regularly cleaned by staff. We will also be showing children how to keep their own personal learning areas clean too
- Measures will be in place to minimise contact and mixing e.g. staggered break, lunch times, beginning and end of day times
- Enhanced cleaning procedures in the school
- We are asking that children bring no items to school other than a coat that will keep them warm and dry. This is important as from now on, more outdoor work will be scheduled
- Children are **not permitted** to bring a pencil case, school bag, water bottle or lunch box to school
- Uniforms will be worn. To ensure you feel more at ease with your child returning to school, you may wish to encourage children to change out of uniform as soon as they get home from school and wash the school day away
- We need to keep movement within school and the amount of adults to a minimum within the school site. Therefore, Parents **will not be able** to access the school building. (More details to follow next week)
- PPE will be available for staff use as and when required. If you wish, you can provide your child with a mask to wear indoors. Please note that members of staff may choose to wear a mask or visor.

- A non-contact forehead thermometer will be used to monitor temperatures when a child becomes ill in school
- Children should be taught the rules of Use it, Bin it, Kill it. **Please help us by providing your child with tissues which will stay in school.** They should be taught to sneeze into a tissue and bin it immediately.
- New child friendly signage will be displayed throughout the school
- The school playground will be zoned for children to play safely within their class bubbles

Please continue to:

- **Encourage your child to wash their hands using the 20 second rule**
- **Teach your child the rules of Use it, Bin it, Kill it.**

School in this new academic term will be different. Please see below a range of changes to normal procedures to ensure the safety of you, your children and staff.

ENTERING SCHOOL EACH MORNING

- **The school gates will remain closed until 8.40am. Please do not attempt to come to school before that time as no one will be allowed to enter. All staff will be required to work preparing classrooms, etc. before this time and therefore will not be available to supervise children. CHILDREN SHOULD NOT BE SENT TO SCHOOL BEFORE THIS TIME AS THERE WILL BE NO STAFF AVAILABLE TO SUPERVISE THEM AND SCHOOL GATES WILL BE LOCKED**
- We are dissuading parents from driving into the school car park. We understand that parents of our younger children Year1 to 3, who live a considerable distance from the school, may need to drive into the school carpark to drop children off, but we are trying to keep traffic within school grounds to a minimum. Please walk if you can. A member of staff, (likely Miss Weir or Mr McCann) will man the school gates from 8.40 am to 9.00 am. The school gates will be locked at 9.05. **Please be on time for school.** Year 5-7 children should, as much as possible, walk to school. Children only should pass through the school gates. Initially they will be escorted to the school playground, or classroom by a member of staff. Once children are secure with this routine they will be able to walk directly into their classrooms without a staff escort.
- Parents/guardians will **not be permitted in the school playground** at any time.
- We cannot mix class bubbles. Therefore those children who are siblings of children who start school at 8.45, (and are not due to start until 9.00 am), will not be allowed to enter classrooms until 9.00. We will however, if necessary, arrange supervision for these children in the playground.
- **Year 2 and 4** children should enter via the school **back gates** which is nearer their classrooms. **Year 1, Year 3 and Years 5, 6 and 7** should enter via the **front gates.**

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SCHOOL AND PARENTS

- The school will be communicating with parents in the following ways: through telephone, text message, email, Facebook Private Message, School Website.
- Information will be published on the school website and our school Facebook site
- If parents need to communicate with members of staff, we ask you to do so either by telephone, private message on our school's Facebook page or email. All teachers are following strict timetables, trying to protect class bubbles and should not be approached by parents without a prior appointment. We can of course arrange a time for you to communicate with staff members - if necessary - in a safer way.

IT IS VITAL WE HAVE YOUR MOST UP-TO-DATE TELEPHONE NUMBERS AND EMAIL ADDRESS SO YOU CAN BE CONTACTED IMMEDIATELY. PLEASE CONTACT THE SCHOOL OFFICE DURING THE WEEK BEGINNING 17TH AUGUST TO UPDATE CONTACT DETAILS.

CHILDREN ENTERING SCHOOL

- Children will be asked to wash/sanitise their hands on entering their classrooms
- They will walk to their desks and put coats over the back of their chairs. **Cloakrooms will be out of use**
- Children will be provided with toast each morning, if they wish to eat this
- Children will be provided with water

SAFETY PROCEDURES OVER THE COURSE OF THE SCHOOL DAY

- The teacher will provide stationery and writing equipment for each child. This equipment will remain in school and will not be shared with others. Parents should ensure your child has writing and colouring equipment, scissors, ruler (when applicable), Pritt stick etc at home for home learning
- Equipment in school will be cleaned after use
- Children should not bring mobile phones into school
- Reading books/Accelerated Reader books will be sent home and returned to school on certain days determined by each class teacher. On return to school, they will be stored separately for 72 hours before returning to shelves.
- After use, all toys, equipment, electronic devices will be cleaned. The sharing of resources will be limited as much as possible.
- There will be clear rules for children to follow, made in consultation with them. These will be gently, carefully and regularly explained to pupils. Our overriding rule is to BE KIND and a lot of talk with children will focus on being kind with our actions to keep ourselves and others safe.
- Regular cleaning will take place over the course of the day

WELLBEING

We recognise that when children return to school that they will need time to adapt to school and discuss with the teacher and classmates what their experience was like during the period of school closure. With that in mind children will:

- Have conversations to identify and acknowledge both negatives and positives in recent experiences. We will open a dialogue where pupils and staff (separately or together) start to consider what has been good or bad about the change to educational arrangements.
- Experience assemblies by video conference in class or small groups
- Have continued opportunities to talk about their experiences over the past few months
- Have opportunities to talk about community issues that have been highlighted in the media, such as 'Black Lives Matter', vulnerability of elderly in care homes, as examples.
- Have opportunities for one-to-one conversations with trusted adults where they can feel supported
- Experience some refocussed lessons on relevant topics, for example, mental wellbeing or staying safe
- Enjoying pastoral activities, such as positive opportunities to renew and develop friendships and peer groups
- Enjoy a variety of enriching creative and developmental activities

HOMEWORK

We will be providing you with relevant information about this at the beginning of September.

RECOVERY CURRICULUM

I know you will understand that teachers will be spending a substantial amount of time during the day focusing on Literacy and Numeracy, trying to close gaps in learning which may have occurred over the last few months. We will also be developing lessons that can be taken outdoors where children will be able to move much more freely. A warm, dry coat with a hood is therefore essential.

SACRAMENTS

First Holy Communion will take place for Mrs Dawson's class at 10.30 on September 12th. Miss Barr's Year 5 children will receive this sacrament at 12 noon on September 12th. Details will follow at the beginning of September.

First Confession has to be arranged for the Year 4 children at a later date. When we have a date arranged parents will be informed.

I apologise that this is a lot of information to absorb, including a number of fundamental changes to our normal procedure. We hope that you recognise that we are doing everything in our power to ensure the safety and wellbeing of your child while continuing to provide them with the highest nurturing educational and learning experience. In spite of these current unprecedented challenges in each of our lifetimes, we are very much looking forward to welcoming your child back to school at the end of this month. We have missed them and you.

Please take care, remain vigilant and KEEP SAFE,

Miss M Weir (Principal)