

St. Francis of Assisi Primary School

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23rd August 2021

Dear Parent/ Guardian,

We are delighted to be welcoming our Year 2 – Year 7 pupils back to school on Tuesday 31st August after what we hope has been a relaxed and enjoyable summer break. We are thrilled to welcome the arrival of our new Reception, Primary 1 and Rang 1 pupils, who will be staggered in throughout next week for what is the beginning of their new and exciting journey in our school.

While it is important that we continue to be vigilant in regard to the transmission of Covid-19, the school will continue to use the 'class bubble' system within the school building, while a more relaxed system of 'consistent groups' will be adapted for the school yard.

School Starting Times:

Following the success of the earlier starting time over the last 18 months, staff recognise the benefit of pupils settling in more quickly for morning lessons, allowing us to maximise quality teaching opportunities.

We therefore have adjusted the school times as follows:

- **Pupil supervision in the yard will begin at 8:45am** – NB children should not be left unsupervised on school grounds before this time.
- **Bell rings at 8:55am - School day begins at 9am** - Staff will then escort the pupils to their classrooms.
- Parents of the younger pupils should accompany their children to the gate of their designated yards.

Morning Supervision 8:45-8:55am	
Class	Designated Area
Reception/Primary 1 Miss McBride	Week 1/2 - To ease with settling in period parents should accompany pupils to the classroom doors. Week 3 onwards - Outdoor Play Area at external classroom door.
Rang 1/2 Bean Uí Thuathail Primary 2 Mrs Loughlin	First Play Area in Main Yard - Beside the Main Gates of Staff Carpark at bottom of carpark steps.
Primary 3 Mrs O Malley/Mrs Donaghy Primary 4 Mrs McEvoy	Middle Area in Main Yard - Enter yard via small gate at bottom of the carpark steps.
Primary 5 Mrs Smith Primary 6 Miss Hughes Primary 7 Mr Sloan	Play Area to left in yard – Enter yard through small gate at courtyard beside the Foundation Stage Building.

School Finishing Times:

With the new earlier start to the school teaching day the Rang 1/2 and P1 – P3 classes will continue to finish at the new time of 2pm as it was last year.

It does however mean a slight change in operational hours for our P4-7 classes. Other schools have introduced similar changes with an earlier finish time of 2pm one day per week. This ensures teachers are working in line with contractual teaching hours and presents teachers with 'protected planning time' as directed by DENI.

It is important to note that all pupils will retain their statutory direct teaching time as traditionally, pre-covid, school supervision would have been 9am-9:10am with lessons starting at 9:15am.

After careful consideration we have chosen **Friday for a 2pm finish** as staff would be able to then prepare for the following weeks' lessons.

Collection Times and Exit Doors	
Reception	Collected at the classroom door outside play area.
Primary 1 (Wk1/2 12pm Week 3 onwards 2pm)	Collected at classroom door.
Rang 1 (Wk1/2 12pm Week 3 onwards 2pm)	Outside double doors below the courtyard.
Rang 2 (2pm)	
Primary 2 and Primary 3 (2pm)	External Canteen doors P2 courtyard/ P3 side of front carpark.
Primary 4-7 (Mon-Thurs 3pm and Friday 2pm)	Main gates at front of the school.

School Dinners:

There will be no school dinners on Tuesday 31st August. All pupils need to take a packed lunch into school. School meals will be available from Wednesday 1st September. Dinners must be paid for in advance.

Parent Pay:

All payments must be made in advance of ordering school dinners using the Parent Pay system opening this weekend. If your account has not been credited with sufficient funds your child can not be registered for school dinners.

Please be careful to click the correct item as the school will not be able to trace monies paid into the wrong sub account eg: dinners paid into snack or Breakfast Club account.

The Education Authority asked for all entitled pupils to reapply online for Free School Meals for the 2021/2022 school year. Applications must be processed before entitlement commences -otherwise meals must be paid for using the Parent Pay system or pupils should take a packed lunch until entitlement has been confirmed.

School-Home Communication using Online Forums:

Parents will over the next few weeks receive invites to join the classroom forums such as Seesaw or Google Classrooms, where information, resources and homework will be shared. Following feedback from parents we are in discussions as to which app served us best and was more parent friendly.

Temporary email addresses for teachers will be shared on these forums so in the absence of face to face chat, a parent can contact the teacher about any concerns or arrange a meeting if necessary. More information will follow.

Wraparound Services:

We are delighted to announce the reopening of the Breakfast Club at 8am and the Minding Club (Mon-Thurs) 2pm-3pm starting Wednesday 1st September. Payment must be made in advance using the Parent Pay system please.

After School activities will resume week beginning Monday 13th August –details to follow.

Guidance for Parents:

In helping to manage and minimise the transmission of Covid 19 parents have a key role in making schools safe and should continue to:

- Promote compliance with COVID-19 guidance in school.
- Ensure compliance with PHA guidance of child isolating due to:
 - The child having COVID-19 symptoms, in which case parents should book a PCR test and support the child to isolate with close contacts of the child following PHA protocols for self-isolation.
 - The child being identified as a close contact, either as a household member of a symptomatic or confirmed case, or as a close contact of a case not in their household.
 - The child having returned to Northern Ireland from another country and isolating in line with NI Direct Travel advice and regulations.

Contact numbers: It is vitally important that the school hold the most recent contact details for you and your emergency contact numbers. Please update the school secretary should contact numbers change.

School uniforms:

While it is recognised that many families do not have a full second uniform, uniforms should be regularly washed and changed throughout the school week.

To help with washing routines PE uniform will be worn in school 2 days per week as in line with DE recommendations.

The PE uniform now consists of a:

Crested navy PE hoody, navy tracksuit bottoms, a white polo t-shirt and any colour/brand of trainers.

Before the Halloween break in October we would ask that all pupils would have a full separate PE uniform to include the navy crested hoody on sale in Mickey Beatties.

Equipment and Supplies:

Reception, Rang 1/2 and P1-P3 pupils will receive a plastic homework folder from their teacher for their weekly homework pack and any reading books. Schools bags will not be required in P1-3.

P4-P7 pupils are permitted to use a schoolbag which we recommend is sanitised at home on a regular basis.

Pupils may take to school:

1. Water bottle
2. A pencil case of supplies which for younger classes will remain in school for your child's personal use.
3. Lunchbox
4. Breaktime Snack (P3-P7 in line with our healthy eating policy crackers/ cheese/ fruit etc)
5. Raincoat (pupils will be outside at break even during light showers of rain)
6. P3-P7 only - Hygiene supplies **hand sanitiser, soap** for sensitive skin, small packet of **tissues etc**

We very much look forward to having the children back in our classrooms for what we hope will be a more consistent and 'normal' school year. We pray to our patron saint, St Francis of Assisi, to watch over and guide us upon our return to school.

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Mrs Feena Hughes
Principal