



AUTUMN BULLETIN

SEPTEMBER 2023

Welcome – A warm welcome to everyone and especially our new P1 pupils. We hope you all had a relaxing and enjoyable good summer break.

You may have seen the planning permission in the local papers for our multi-million-pound renovation and extension. The building programme has been further delayed but is expected now to commence in 2024. We appreciate parents' understanding that non-urgent maintenance, such as painting, grounds work etc is on hold, while we await the commencement of the major building work.

IMPORTANT DATES:

SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER
12 th Core Kids NI Exercise-a-thon	16 th Maths Week Ireland
15 th P1 stay in school until 1.50pm	23 rd Flu Vaccine
	27 th October Halloween Fun Dress-up Day
25 th Staff Development Day (Pupils do not attend)	30 th Oct-3 rd Nov – School Closed for Mid-Term break

Annual Curriculum Information Meetings for Parents:

	Parents	Time	Location
Thurs 14th September	P1	1pm	Your child's classroom. Please enter school via the church carpark.
Mon 18th September	P7	2.15pm	
Wed 20th September	P2	1.30pm	
	P5	2.15pm	
Thurs 21st September	P3	1.30pm	
	P4	2.15pm	
Tues 26th September	P6	2.15pm	

CHECK OUT THE CALENDAR ON OUR WEBSITE FOR FURTHER UPDATES.**HOME / SCHOOL COMMUNICATION:**

Positive and regular home school communication are at the core of our ethos. We have continued to invest heavily in our school website and Seesaw to offer parents a window into school life and so that important dates and two-way information can be shared between home and school. We ask that all parents use the apps. Please be aware that teachers will respond to Seesaw messages during their working hours but not during teaching time (9am - 3pm). If you have an urgent query or issue, please call the school.

ABSENCES:

Parents should **report absences via the button on the website** homepage. Reasons for absences must also be noted on our computer system and will be accessible to the Education Welfare Officer. We are obliged to refer to the Welfare Service when attendance drops below 85% (28 days in the year, the equivalent of almost 6 weeks of school).

FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S

Our Parent Support Group, Friends of St Mary's is a valuable part of our school community and the group have provided a great support with funding, helping at events and in providing special treats for the children. The group plans to continue to raise funds in 23-24, with a focus on mental and physical wellbeing. All parents / grandparents etc are welcome to attend the next meeting, which will be in the school library at **2pm on Monday 11th September.**

SCHOOL / ECO COUNCILS:

We are very keen that the children's voice is considered in school decision making and that they learn the processes and benefits of democracy. P5-7 pupils are currently running elections for the School and ECO councils. New members will bring the views of their classmates to a meeting with Mrs Kelly in the coming weeks.

BEHAVIOUR:

St Mary's prides itself on being a friendly, caring school where **bullying behaviour is not tolerated**. Our Anti-Bullying Policy, reflects the most recent legislation and like all core policies, is available on the website or from the school office. There is a rolling **preventative Anti-Bullying programme** in place in all classes and from time-to-time additional assemblies, workshops and other events are also provided. If you as parents have any worries or concerns about your child's well-being, please do not hesitate to see the class teacher or myself. Allegations of bullying are taken seriously; the NI Anti-Bullying Assessment Matrix is used to address concerns and formal records are maintained.

Please note that Golden Time is used as a behaviour management strategy from P2-7. **Pupils who achieve 100% Golden Time will be awarded a certificate at the end of each half-term. As part of our restorative practice, Think Time Discussion Sheets will be sent home with pupils for a parental signature following incidents of unacceptable behaviour.**

RSE: All school have been required to provide an RSE curriculum for many years. Our policy (available on the school website) clearly outlines the practice in St Mary's. You will have been aware of news coverage regarding the changes to legislation for the teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education in post-primary schools. The Department of Education are currently consulting with parents on the matter and you are invited to share your opinions at <https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/de/rse-consultation>

CONCUSSION: If a child has suffered a knock on the head outside school, please make us aware, so that we can take the necessary precautions to address a possible secondary concussion.

MEDICINES: It is our policy that medicines should not be administered by school staff, except in cases where a care plan has been agreed for long-term medication. **Please do not send antibiotics, cough mixture, pain relief etc. with children.**

UNIFORM: We ask that for safety children wear suitable footwear and only stud earrings. It is **VERY IMPORTANT** that each item of uniform be **clearly marked** with the child's name. Please note that only **plain navy trousers** should be worn (i.e., without stripes or emblems). Following the uniform code is part of respecting the rules of our school and should be adhered to as such.

HEALTHY EATING: We continue to promote our healthy eating policy and ask that children bring only **fruit or other healthy snacks for break**. We do ask that packed lunches also contain healthy food. We continue to offer breakfasts /brunches or snacks to classes on occasion through the Fare Share programme. Parents will be notified through Seesaw when classes are to be offered these. **NO CHOCOLATE, CRISPS OR EVEN TRACES OF NUTS OF ANY KIND IN BREAKS OR PACKED LUNCHES PLEASE!!**

DINNERS: All dinners must be **pre-booked and paid** through the school money app.

We aim to work closely with parents and again ask you to contact the class teacher or me about any queries or concerns you may have. I wish one and all a happy and rewarding school year, with all our pupils working to the best of their ability, respecting each other, and enjoying all aspects of school life.

Mrs. P Kelly
PRINCIPAL



Parking at school



Children who are collected by car will exit through the church gate, so as to reduce the roadside danger at bus times.



For the safety of pupils, we ask that the school car park is reserved for staff and disabled access only.

We all want to ensure that all pupils can enter and exit school in the safest possible manner.