

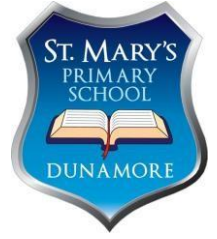


ST. MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

Principal: Mrs Eileen Ward B.Ed (Hons) M.Ed, PQH (NI)

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Tuesday 3rd September, 2024

Dear Parents,

I hope everyone is keeping well and that you have all had a chance to relax and enjoy the summer months, despite the wet weather. It is hard to believe that we are into a new school year. I am sure many are filled with a mixture of nerves and excitement as we embark on September but I have no doubt by the end of the week, the children will be well into a routine and settled.

We will be trialling a Breakfast club every day from Monday 16th September. It will operate from 8.00-8.30am. Children who wish to avail of the breakfast club will be able to book on Parent Pay for the week/days ahead (similar to booking dinners). Breakfast will be priced at £1 per day per child. Only children who have registered on Parent Pay for breakfast club will be allowed to enter the school from 8.00-8.30am. A separate note will go out again next week.

As in previous years, the school will open at 8.30am. **Any child who comes between 8.30 and 8.45am MUST come in the front door and go the assembly hall and wait for their class teacher to collect at 8.45am.**

From 8.45am to 9.15am, all children will enter the school (via their designated doors) and go directly to their classrooms where they will be supervised until formal lessons begin at 9.15am.

Children **should not** be dropped off any earlier than 8.30am.

Children in Primary 1 and 2 may be dropped off at the front door of the school.

We would ask that all parents of children in Primary 3-7 drop their children at the gate and let them walk in on their own.

Children in P3 and P4 will enter the school building by the door beside Mrs Gallagher's classroom (ramped access door).

Children in Primary 5 will go straight to their mobile.

Children in Primary 6 and Primary 7 will enter the school by the door beside the P6 classroom.

Staff will be on hand to make sure children enter via the correct door.

It is wonderful to see all the children in their new school uniform. The uniform is worn with pride and I would remind you that children are to wear **plain black shoes** to school, and not trainers. Leggings, jogging bottoms, hoodies and colourful trainers are not part of the school uniform. PE uniform and trainers may be worn on PE days and the class teacher will inform their class of the days in question. Your efforts are very much appreciated. Please make sure all items of clothing are labelled.

We would also ask that children come to school with their own pencil case/stationery. Stationery includes: Pencil, rubber, sharpener, ruler, colouring pencils (e.g. Twistables) and glue.

We have been informed by the Education Authority that school dinners will still cost £2.60 for this school year.

Parent Pay is operating very well and it is very important that dinners are booked/paid for on a Sunday evening for the week ahead. Parents are encouraged to get into this routine. **This applies to ALL children taking dinner, whether you are paying for them or entitled to Free School Meals.** The office staff do not have time to update the system retrospectively this year and your cooperation in this matter will help Ann and Niamh when payments have to be made to the Education Authority.

Primary One will finish school at 2.00pm (from Thursday 12th September). Primary Two will go home at 2.10pm. Miss Mc Flynn and Mrs Crossley will walk the children to the gate and dismiss each child to their parent/childminder. Parents are asked **not** to wait in the playground and to follow the direction of the staff.

For the rest of the pupils in Primary 3-7, children will go home at 3.00pm The children will be brought to the correct gates in the playground where they can be collected, one gate for children getting the bus and another gate for children who are collected. To ensure maximum safety, parents are encouraged to park in the Chapel Car Park and walk down at the specified time and collect their child/ren. Please leave the limited number of spaces in the school car park for parents of very small children or people who may have mobility issues. Your cooperation in this is extremely important and appreciated.

It is strongly encouraged that school transport is used if parents have no other means of getting your child to and from school and if your child meets the eligibility criteria set by the Education Authority.

I would be most grateful if you would adhere to our Healthy Eating Policy and give your child fruit or a healthy alternative for break. Please make every effort to keep sweets and chocolate to a minimum in lunch boxes. We are very much an ALLERGY AWARE

school so I would ask that no nut products/foods containing sesame seeds are brought into school.

Furthermore, it is important that no jewellery be worn in PE lessons. In fact, for health and safety reasons, jewellery should be kept to a minimum at all times.

I would like to stress the importance of full attendance and punctuality. The children are expected to be in school for 9.15am as lessons begin. Parents are encouraged to have their child in school on time; any child in after 9.40am will be marked late for the morning session.

Dental/medical/hair appointments/extra-curricular activities/swimming lessons should all be made outside of school hours. If this is completely unavoidable, please ensure that you inform the school by phone or letter and that children are signed out of the office. Their absence will also be recorded on the attendance register.

As in previous years, family holidays are strongly discouraged during term time. A letter should be submitted to the school providing a reason for and duration of the absence.

The school requires a birth certificate for each child in attendance. If you have not forwarded the necessary birth certificates, please do so as soon as possible. We also require baptismal certificates from children who were baptised outside the parish. Dates for First Holy Communion and Confirmation will be issued in due course.

The first date for the SEAG Assessment/Transfer Test will take place on Saturday 16th November 2024. The second paper will take place on Saturday 23rd November 2024. The deadline for registration closes on Friday 20th September.

I trust that I will have your full support on all these matters. If you need any further information on school practices or policies, do not hesitate to contact the school. Parents are asked not to enter the school building. However, during the course of the year, if there is anything that you would like to discuss about your child, please contact the school and I will be happy to arrange a time for you to speak to the class teacher. Or myself. Teachers cannot take calls during teaching time. The teaching staff for this year are as follows: - P1- Miss Mc Flynn, P2- Mrs Crossley, P3- Mrs Mc Allister, P4-Mrs Gallagher, P5- Mrs Mc Crory, P6-Mr Herbert and P7- Mrs Mallon. We welcome Mrs Mc Crory to St. Mary's and hope that she settles and enjoys her time in to our school

A holiday list for the year ahead is on the website. With your support and commitment, I look forward to a happy and successful year in St Mary's Primary School. To mark the

beginning of the school year, we will have Mass in St. Mary's Church on Monday 16th September at 10am. All parents/grandparents are very welcome to attend.

Please continue to look after yourselves and your loved ones.

I have included a final prayer that Archbishop Eamon Martin has asked to share with you.

*Heavenly Father, as we start anew,
Guide our hearts and minds to You.
Grant us wisdom, patience and grace.
Bless our teachers and this place.
Keep us safe, both near and far,
Shine through us, like a guiding star.
Help us learn, grow and care.
In Jesus' name, this is our prayer.
Amen.*

Kind Regards,

Eileen Ward

Principal

