



# Saint Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit



November 2024

[www.stmaryspsbellaghy.co.uk](http://www.stmaryspsbellaghy.co.uk)



## TERM 1 DATES

Friday 30<sup>th</sup> August to  
Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> December

## Term 1b SCHOOL CLOSURES

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December  
1pm finish  
Christmas Dinner

School closes for Christmas  
on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> December at  
11am and reopens on  
Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January for all  
classes.

## UP-COMING EVENTS

**Thurs 9<sup>th</sup> November**  
Flu Vaccine

**Tues 12<sup>th</sup> November**  
Odd Sock Day to celebrate  
'World Kindness Day'

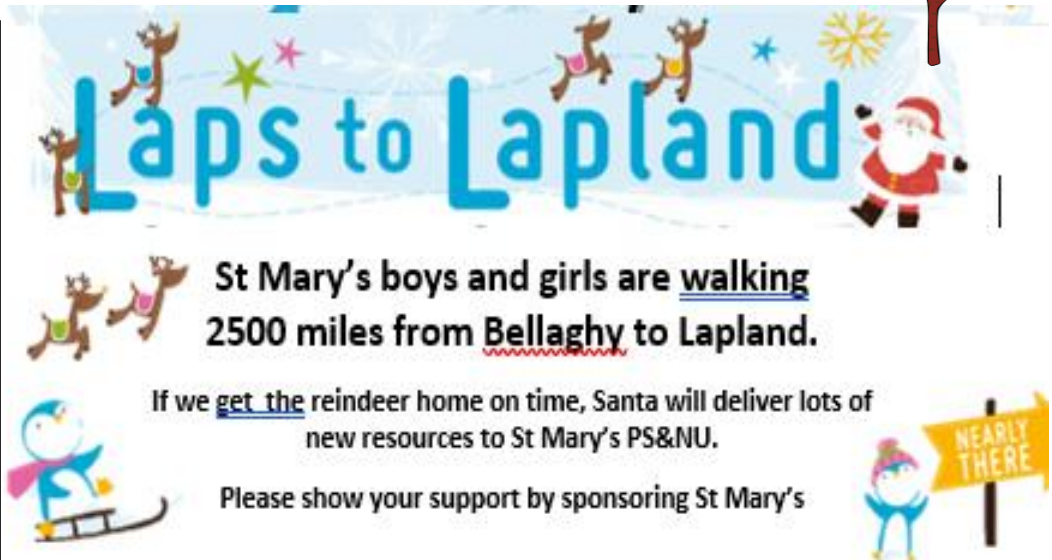
**Mon 18<sup>th</sup> November**  
Road Safety Week  
**BRIGHT DAY DRESS UP**

**Fri 6<sup>th</sup> December**  
Christmas Jumper Daily Mile

**Thurs 12<sup>th</sup> December**  
Nursery Sing Along  
P4-7 Show

**Fri 13<sup>th</sup> December**  
P1 Nativity

**Thurs 19<sup>th</sup> December**  
School Christmas Dinner  
1pm Early closure



The children of St Mary's PS&NU will be completing a **2500 mile** Sponsored Walk to raise funds which will be used to provide resources and activities for all the children in the school. The children have calculated that 12 laps of our new Wellbeing Path is one mile so the whole school will be combining their daily miles in the hope of reaching **30,000 laps** by 19<sup>th</sup> December!

All money raised will be used to buy much needed ICT equipment. Each family will receive a sponsor sheet. It would be appreciated if every family could make an effort to sell at least one sheet as all the children benefit from new resources, bus subsidies, events etc. purchased from School Funds.

## **CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS**

Teachers and pupils are very excited! Being in a Christmas show or assembly is such a valuable experience for children, teaching them important skills like communication, collaboration, and problem-solving.

We have arranged the following:

### **Nursery Christmas Sing Along Thurs 12<sup>th</sup> Dec 9.30am**

School Hall. Parents and family welcome  
£2 entrance

### **P1 Nativity Fri 13<sup>th</sup> Dec 9.30am**

School Hall. Parents and family welcome  
£2 entrance

### **P2&3 Advent Assembly Fri 29<sup>th</sup> Nov**

P2&3 will lead prayers and singing to mark the start of Advent.  
This assembly is for children in school only.

### **P4,5,6,7 Show 'Ready! Steady! Christmas!' Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> Dec 7pm**

Open Door Complex. Parents and school community welcome  
£5 entrance. Payable at the door



## CHOIR

Tuesday 3-4pm

Choir is open to children from P4-7

The choir have been busy preparing to perform at our school Christmas Concert



## BELLAGHY SCHOOL COMMUNITY CHOIR

Our 6 & 7 choir members have been invited to join with Bellaghy PS and St John Bosco PS to a Christmas Sing Along at the

Seamus Heaney Homeplace Centre on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December at 1.30pm.

The children's parents from all three schools will receive tickets to join the festivities. The singing will last around 35mins and complimentary tea, coffee and mince pies will be served in Homeplace after the event.

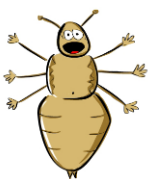
### PARENT TEACHER MEETINGS

Thank you for attending the Parent Teacher Meetings. Please be reminded that you can make an appointment to meet the class teacher at any time during the school year. Thanks again for your continued support

### LUNCHES TREAT DAY – Monday

The school council agreed again that Monday would be 'Treat Day'. We ask parents to support us in this by only sending one lunchbox treat to school on a Monday, such as a small chocolate bar/biscuit – no crisps.

All other days of the week lunchboxes should not include chocolate bars, sweets or crisps.



### HEAD LICE

We remind parents to check their children's hair regularly for head lice and treat as appropriately.

### FLU VACCINE

School Nursing Service were in school on last Friday to distribute the Flu Nasal Vaccine. If your child was absent, and you wish them to receive the vaccine, please contact your GP surgery for advice.



### GOD DRAWING DAY

On Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November schools across the Diocese of Derry engage with great enthusiasm in World Drawing God Day each year! Based on the book, *Drawing God*, by Karen Kiefer, children and adults are invited to draw how they see God. The results and the conversations around this are always amazing.

Find out more on the link below  
<https://www.drawing-god.com/>

### NOVEMBER – MONTH OF THE HOLY SOULS

We gather at this time of year to recall with love those who have passed away and whose memory is dear to us. We remember family, friends, staff members and students who have been part of our school community.

Within the school, we have created a whole school 'Garden of Remembrance'. The remembrance flowers will be displayed throughout November and December. We will offer our morning prayers and prayers throughout the day for those who have died.

*Eternal rest grant unto him/her, O Lord.  
And let perpetual light shine upon him/her.  
May their soul and the souls of all the faithful departed,  
Through the mercy of God,  
Rest in peace. Amen.*

## CLASS ASSEMBLY

Parents are invited to our class assemblies on the following dates and stay for a cup of tea and chat afterwards! These dates will be confirmed nearer the time. The assembly starts at 9.15am

Primary 1 -13<sup>th</sup> June TBC

Primary 3- 14<sup>th</sup> March

Primary 5 -28<sup>th</sup> March

Primary 2- 11<sup>th</sup> April

Primary 4- 16<sup>th</sup> May

Primary 6 -7<sup>th</sup> February

Primary 7 Leavers assembly TBC

## ECO COUNCIL

New Eco members were elected in each class! If any parents have any ideas for projects or want to get involved in maintaining the school environment, please speak to Mrs McLea (P1 teacher).



The Eco team are collecting old clothes for **CASH FOR CLOBBER**  
18<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov

Each family will receive a bin bag to take home. If you have any old clothes please send them into school all week. The bags will be collected on Fri 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov and the money we receive will be used to plant shrubs in our new Wellbeing Garden.

The Eco Council have a Battery Collection Point. Please send your old batteries into school and we will collect them and ensure they are safely disposed of.

# CASH FOR CLOBBER

18<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> November



**Do you have any unwanted clothes or textiles that you are looking to get rid of? Send them our way!**

### We can accept...

Clothing  
Shoes - Pairs only  
Bags  
Hats and scarves  
Ties  
Curtains  
Bed linen  
Belts & Bags

### We can't accept...

Dirty or wet clothing  
Single shoes  
Duvets or pillows  
Mats or carpets



## CASH FOR CLOBBER

**Clothing Recycling.**  
The easy way to generate cash for your School.

*we weigh. we pay.*



## ACCELERATED READER

Primary 4-7 have been reading lots and lots of books and I was delighted to see so many children receiving certificates. Well done boys and girls!



Our library team have been busy developing the non-fiction section of the school library. The children are now using the dewey decimal system to sort the books. If you have any old school/library books at home, please return them to school.

## PRIMARY 4 WORLD WAR 2 TOPIC

P4 have been learning about life during World War 2. On Friday 15<sup>th</sup> November the children are having an 'Evacuee Day'. The P4s are invited to dress up and will be completing lots of activities from WW2.

On Monday 25<sup>th</sup> November the class are travelling to the War Memorial Museum in Belfast. They have been looking at pictures and artifacts from that time.

The bus will be leaving school at 9am and the children will return for 3pm. More details from the class teacher.

## ANTI-BULLYING/KINDNESS WEEK

Anti-Bullying Week 2024 is coordinated in Northern Ireland by the Anti-Bullying Alliance. This year it has the theme 'Respect' and takes place from Monday 11th to Friday 15th November.

The children celebrated difference on Odd Socks Day where adults and children wear odd socks to celebrate what makes us all unique.

Primary 7 pupils will lead our assembly on Friday to teach the children all about inclusion.

As part of 'St Mary's School Development Plan', we are updating our Anti-bullying policy and developing policies and procedures towards becoming a Level 3 school. We are focused on ensuring we create a happy, safe school for all.

## SCHOOL PE POLICY.

All children must have shorts for PE and suitable footwear. Tracksuit bottoms are not allowed due to being a trip hazard. We thank parents for their support in this policy.

***Community + School  
= Opportunities for All***

Every Tuesday, Michael Gerard will be taking P1-7 throughout the day for Fundamental Movement Skills.

The children are thoroughly enjoying the sessions so far. We are very grateful to the Bellaghy GAC for funding this support.



## CHRISTMAS JUMPER, DINNER AND EARLY CLOSURE

Christmas dinner will be celebrated on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December  
Cost £2.60 per child.

School will close at 1pm on this day for all classes. Children are welcome to wear their Christmas Jumpers to school.



## SACRAMENTAL PREPARATIONS PRIMARY 4 & 7

### PRIMARY 4 & 7 SACRAMENTAL MEETING

Primary 4 and 7 Sacramental Meeting will be held on **Thursday 14th November 7pm**. This meeting is for P4&7 pupils and their parents. It is held in the Parish 'Opendoor' Complex. Members of the Derry Diocesan Centre lead and manage the event. Pupils wear their school uniform and should bring a pencil case with colours to complete the tasks.

### PRIMARY 4 ENROLMENT MASS

Congratulations to all the boys and girls in Primary 4 who Enrolled for their sacraments of First Penance and First Eucharist, at mass on **Saturday**. **Thank you to parents who helped in any way**. Thank you to Fr Pat for celebrating the mass, and special thanks to Sinead McNicholl for co-ordinating the 'Do This in Memory' programme. We ask the school community to pray for the children in their preparations.



## P4 & P7 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

### PRIMARY 7

Thursday 14th November 7pm Sacramental Meeting for P4 and P7 Parents and Pupils  
Saturday 7th December 7pm Mass of Commitment and Pledge for P7 pupils and parents  
Friday 28th March 11am Confirmation

Please note the change of date for Confirmation. Fr O'Hagan had to reschedule due to personal reasons.



### PRIMARY 4 'Do This in Memory' Programme:

Saturday 9th November 7pm Enrolment Ceremony  
Thursday 14th November 7pm Sacramental Meeting for P4 and P7 Parents and Pupils  
Saturday 14th December 7pm  
Saturday 18th January 7pm  
Saturday 22nd February 7pm  
Saturday 22nd March 7pm  
Tuesday 25th March 7pm First Confession  
Saturday 12th April 7pm  
10th May 11am Holy Communion. Fr O'Hagan has confirmed this date.

## PRIMARY 4 PARENT HELPERS NEEDED - REQUEST FROM SINEAD MCNICHOLL

Dear Primary 4 Parents

As we begin the preparation for your child making the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist through the 'Do this in Memory Programme', I would be very grateful for some parent volunteers to assist in helping with the programme.

There is little time commitment. Help with collecting the children's work from school and preparing the altar on a Friday evening before the Saturday mass - no more than 30mins. On the evening of the mass, help with organising the children in the prayer room and ensuring that they are returned to their seats. I am also looking for parent readers and parents to take place in the offertory over the six masses.

If you are willing to help could you please contact myself by mobile Sinead McNicholl on 07595329083 Every little help will be very much appreciated.

Many thanks

Sinead McNicholl [s.mcnicholl@inspirewellbeing.org](mailto:s.mcnicholl@inspirewellbeing.org)

## ROAD SAFETY WEEK

# BRIGHT day

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> November

The children are invited to wear their brightest clothes to school to highlight that bright coloured clothing helps others see us while we are walking.

Throughout the week St Mary's will be completing

## #Brake5 Challenge

The challenge focuses on the number five to highlight the fact that five people die on the roads every day.



The children will be doing lots of activities such as:



- 5 keepy uppies with Michael Gerard,
- 5 sign hunt
- 5-minute dance-time
- 5-minute read
- 5-minute silence
- 5-minute pop song singalong
- 5-minutes extra playtime!

The student Council will be organising a poster competition in each class.

After the  
crash. Road  
Safety  
Week  
Every road victim counts

17-23 November 2024

#RoadSafetyWeek

## ST MARY'S CELEBRATES MATHS WEEK

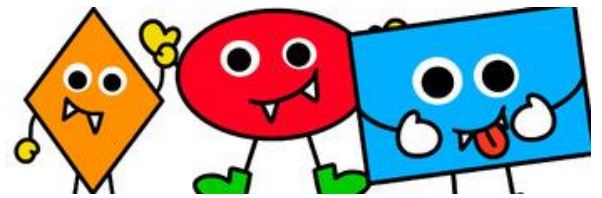
The children sharpened their Mental Maths Skills during Maths Week!

Mrs McNamara and Miss Monaghan our Numeracy Co-ordinators organised a Boogie Bingo Event for all classes. The children completed danced and worked on number questions in a race to complete their bingo board. There was much fun and lots of prizes.

All classes made use of our Outdoor Wellness Garden, participating in a scavenger hunt, right angle hunt, and playful counting activities. A super fun week!



## ST MARYS SHAPE MONSTER MASH



Huge thank you to all the mums and dads who helped the children make their fantastic shape monsters. We nearly needed an extra classroom to fit them all!

The children went outside and completed their Monster Mash Daily Mile on our well-being path. Learning is fun and active in St Mary's.



Check out our Shape Monster Mash Dance on our super school website

<https://www.stmaryspsbellaghy.co.uk/news-673/shape-monster-mash-a/?p=2&tags=,1096>





# Forest School

As part of our outdoor learning development, St Mary's applied and were delighted to be accepted onto Forest School training! The training is facilitated by Mid-Ulster Council and takes place in Dungannon.

Research now backs up what forest school practitioners have known all along – that children and young people are stimulated by the outdoors and typically experience, over time, an increase in their self belief, confidence, learning capacity, enthusiasm, communication and problem-solving skills and emotional well-being.

St Mary's Forest School co-ordinator is Mrs Dooey and her lucky P5 class has been chosen to participate in all the training activities. On their trips so far they used materials from the natural environment to create their very own 'framed' art and worked in groups to build a den. The favourite part has been making s'mores! The class learned all about fire safety and even got to practice making a spark. Everyone had a fabulous day!





# OPERATION OUTDOOR TRANSFORMATION

Dear Parents/Guardians

We are launching OPERATION TRANSFORMATION in the hope that, with your help, we can continue to develop our outdoor area so that pupils will be provided with enhanced opportunities for playful learning, to socialise positively, explore and problem solve, be creative and imaginative, and experience success!

Governors, PTA, parents, staff and pupils have been working to raise money which has been used to fund **stage 1 of the transformation**. Three new large pieces of wooden equipment have been added to our jungle gym, a brand new outdoor classroom is almost ready in the factory for delivery, and we have a fantastic tarmac wellness path and pebble pit created. The school were recently awarded a KEEP NORTHERN IRELAND BEAUTIFUL grant of £1500 to purchase large wooden planters, shovels and gardening gloves.

**We really need your help with stage 2 of our transformation!**

We have a list of resources which we would use to create fun, active, cross curricular activities for the children. We are asking parents to help us. Please have a look at the list below and see if you have anything which we could use. We would be very grateful and we know all children would benefit from them.



## Large Pebbles/stones



## Crates



## Small paving blocks



## Basic tools

Hammers  
Screwdrivers  
goggles



## Mud Kitchen

Saucepans  
Frying pan  
Old small fridge  
Old microwave  
Cooking Utensils  
Knives/forks/spoons  
Cups saucers  
Plates  
Sieve  
Measuring jug  
Rolling pins  
Cookie cutters



## Water Wall

1 Large Barrel (Water Butt)  
Plumbers Pipe  
Plastic Funnels  
Plastic Guttering  
Plastic Containers  
Hose



## Music Wall

Metal Objects i.e.  
oven trays,  
saucepans/large  
dishes, wire cage  
Wooden/Plastic  
Beaters  
Musical  
Instruments



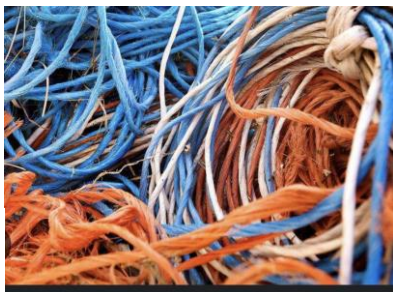
## Pebble Pit

Buckets  
Spades  
Rakes



## Den Building

Bamboo canes  
Tarp  
Baler twine  
String  
Rope



## Seating & Table

### Top Area

Cable Reels  
Logs  
Palettes  
Tractor Tyres  
Toy cars

