



Saint Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit

March/April 2025

www.stmaryspsbellaghy.co.uk



IMPORTANT DATES Term 2/3 SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mon 17th March
St Patrick's Day

Fri 18th April – Fri 25th April
inclusive. Easter Holidays
Please note: The school will close at 11am Thurs 17th April

Mon 5th May
Bank Holiday

Fri 23rd May - Tues 27th May
inclusive
Mid-term

UP-COMING EVENTS

Fri 14th March
Eco Green Day

Wed 26th March
World Maths Day
P6 SEAG Parent Meeting

Fri 28th March
Confirmation 11am

Thurs 3rd April
PTA Meeting

Fri 4th April
Bun Sale
all proceeds to Trocaire

11th April
P2 Assembly

Fri 3rd May
P3 Assembly

Sat 10th May
Holy Communion 11am

Fri 16th May
P4 Assembly

Thurs 12th June TBC
Sports Day TBC

DRIVEN DEEPER INTO POVERTY BY CLIMATE CHANGE: PLEASE HELP



TROCAIRE CAMPAIGN 2025:

Guatemalan families pushed further into poverty by climate change.

Ilma, her husband Julio and their four children feature on this Lent's Trócaire Box. The Lenten Appeal this year is highlighting the direct and indirect consequences resulting from climate change that are having a profoundly negative effect on the lives of millions of people in Guatemala and right across the developing world.

The Lenten Appeal centres around the story of the family and the small community of La Paz in central Guatemala. Ilma and Julio have four children and depend on farming to feed themselves and earn an income. Like many families and communities Trócaire works with, they are experiencing increasingly erratic weather patterns due to climate change. This is having life-changing consequences on their livelihoods, wellbeing and future.

During this season of Lent, we are encouraging the children to challenge themselves to give something up and donate money to charity. The children have made great suggestions, like giving up: some time on the Xbox or watching television or going on: saying more prayers or going to mass every Sunday.

Each class will have a Trocaire box and will be running small activities to help raise money. We would appreciate your continued support.

TROCAIRE EVENTS

Primary 7 **Bun Sale** on Fri 4th April.
We ask for donations of buns please.

The **ECO COUNCIL** are organising an our annual
**'Guess the Number of Sweeties in
the Jar Competition'** 25p a guess

The **SCHOOL COUNCIL** are organising the
'Name the Bunny' Raffle 50p per guess.



All proceed will go towards Trocaire.

GREEN DAY

The Primary 3 class performed a super assembly on Friday to teach us all about St Patrick. They retold the story of his capture and how he returned to Ireland to tell everyone about the goodness of God. All classes had lots of fun celebrating Irish culture and even learned some Irish words as well.

P5,6,7 celebrated the end of the day with a céilí outside. See more photos and videos on our school website.

CELEBRATING IRISH CULTURE

Primary 3 & 4 Beginners Irish Dancing

Monday afternoons 3-4pm for Primary 7 girls and boys organised by Miss Cassidy.



TONY FITZPATRICK MEMORIAL

Tony Fitzpatrick was a P6 pupil in Holy Family PS Magherafelt. At the start of this academic year, the boys and girls of St Mary's raised money to help fund treatment for Tony. Unfortunately Tony passed away in late September.

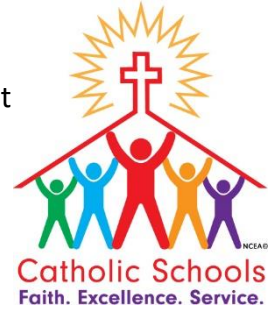
Tony's family have been so grateful of everyone's support and are keen to ensure Tony's energetic spirit is remembered with positivity. They have asked that the money raised by the school is returned to the school and used to fund an activity/equipment here. We are very grateful and pray for their continued strength.



Tony was a keen follower of footballer and so the family organised a Gaelic football blitz for the local Magherafelt schools. St Mary's PS Bellaghy were delighted to attend and won the shield! It was a super well organised day. Thank you to Holy Family PS and the Fitzpatrick family.

ST MARY'S IS A CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Our school community supports the pupils and families engaged in sacramental preparation through recognition and prayer. Prayer and worship are integral to the everyday life of a Catholic School and helps to nourish the spiritual growth of all members of our school community. We have strong links with our parish and celebrate the liturgical year with a range of events. We ask our school community to continue to pray for all children in St Mary's and particularly for P4 and P7 as they prepare for their sacraments.



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

Derry Catholic Schools Week took place in January with the theme *Catholic Schools : Alive in Christ*. There were lots of special activities happening throughout every class, focusing on God's love and prayer.

GRANDPARENTS DAY

Primary 7 held their annual Grandparent's Day with a special assembly followed by bingo and refreshments. It was lovely to see so many grandparents visit the school. Such a special day for everyone involved.



SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

The children from St Mary's will receive the sacrament of confirmation alongside children from St John Bosco and New Row St Patrick's on Friday 28th March at 11am. Children wear their own clothes. Primary 7s and their siblings are not required to attend school on that day. If siblings are attending school on the day, we ask that they are collected by 10am to avoid disruption to the rest of the classes.

ST BRIGID'S DAY

We are very grateful to parents who sent in rushes for the children to make crosses. The primary 7 class were experts and helped the other classes with their crosses. The boys and girls had to concentrate and persevere to get them made. They were reminded to display them at home to help keep them safe.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

The Primary 4 class will be celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation on Tuesday 27th April at 7pm. (NB. This date will be confirmed by Fr O'Hagan nearer the time.) This marks a commitment from the children to prepare for their sacraments through good deeds and prayer.



SACRAMENT OF EUCHARIST

The next 'Do This In Memory of Me' masses for Primary 4 is on Saturday 22nd March & Saturday 27th April 7.00pm. parents received details through the Schools NI App.



St Mary's and St John Bosco will be celebrating Holy Communion together on Saturday 10th May at 11am. More details will follow from Miss Monaghan nearer the time.

PRIMARY 7 QUIZ MASTERS!

Primary 7 pupils represented the school at Bannvale Credit Union Quiz, and Cumann na mBunscol Quiz.

There was a wide range of questions based on general knowledge, Irish history, geography, current affairs, music and sport. Some very tricky questions that I'm sure would stump a few parents too! Super knowledge and teamwork shown by all the pupils.

Mrs Cathy McErlean is currently running an Afterschools Table Quiz on Wednesdays 3-4pm for P5-7



01234567890123456789012345678901234567890123456789

NUMBER DAY

01234567890123456789012345678901234567890123456789

Well done parents and staff for fantastic inventive ways to dress-up for 'Number Day'. The classes took part in number trails, investigations, songs and had lots of fun. Thank you to the maths co-ordinators Miss Monaghan and Mrs McNamara for organising the event



RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION

This term, most classes will begin their Relationships Education booklet 'Flourish' from the Catholic Schools' Trustees Service. All parents will also receive an online copy of the Flourish scheme overview. If you have any questions, please contact Mrs McCann.

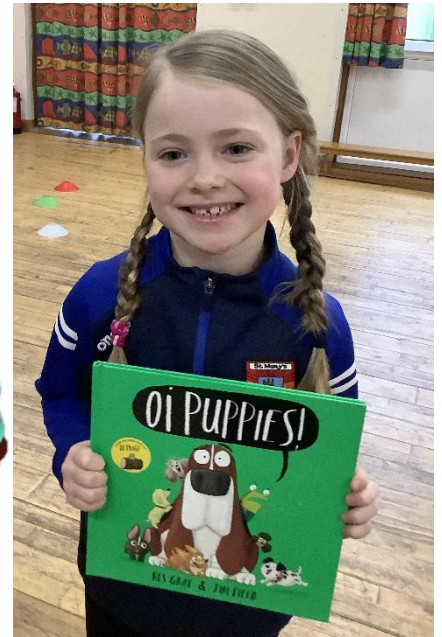




ECO AND SCHOOL COUNCIL NEWS



The Eco-council organised a Book Swap in school. A great way to recycle books, encourage and improve reading... and have fun! So many of the pupils donated books which made it a massive success! Well done and thank you for all your support!



FUNDRAISING FOR A GOOD CAUSE - TROCAIRE



Primary 7 **Bun Sale** on Fri 4th April. We ask for donations of buns please.

The **ECO COUNCIL** are organising their annual 'Guess the Number of Sweeties in the Jar Competition' 25p a guess



The **SCHOOL COUNCIL** are organising the 'Name the Bunny' Raffle 50p per guess.



All proceed will go towards Trocaire.



Bun Sale

Friday 4th April

We would really appreciate donations from all classes.

WALK TO SCHOOL WEEK

Children are encouraged to Walk to School (or part of the way to school) during the week **19-23 May 2025**

On Friday 23rd May all classes are invited to 'Walk their Fluffy Pet to School'.

Weather permitting, we hope to promote lots of outdoor learning during the week.



St Mary's PS Battery Recycling Challenge!



Please send any old batteries into school to be recycled to help us maintain our Eco-school status!

The class that brings in the most will win a special prize at the end of the 2nd term (before Easter holidays)



INTERNET SAFETY DAY

Teaching our children about staying safe online is very important. During Internet Safety week, all classes logged on to www.thinkuknow.co.uk, completed age-appropriate tasks. Mrs Dooey the ICT co-ordinator organised poster competition for all classes. We encourage parents to continue to promote the message at home.



Click Clever, Click Safe!

PRIMARY 6 TRANSFER SEAG

A secondary schools group - Schools' Entrance Assessment Group (SEAG) administer the Entrance Assessment used by all 62 academically selective schools in N. Ireland. If you decide that you wish to register your child to sit the test, the registration process will be online and all the information regarding content, format and important dates can be found on their website. SEAG webpage also has FAQs for parents. These should answer many questions you may already have surrounding the test:

<https://seagni.co.uk/>

Parent's of Primary 6 pupils who are considering registering for the SEAG test 2025 are invited to attend a short information session here at St Mary's school:

Wednesday 26th March at 6.30pm

Safeguarding Team

We remind parents who they can contact if they have any concerns.

Mrs Mary McCann Principal

**Designated Teacher for Safeguarding
Mrs Claire McWilliams VP (P7)**

**Deputy Designated Teachers for Safeguarding
Mrs Margaret Fegan (P3)
Mrs Fiona McGill (Nursery)**

School Telephone Number: 02879 386360

VISIT FROM TIMESTEPS

P6 and P6/7 have been studying what life was like in the days of the Titanic. They had a very special visit from Victoria Smith, a second class passenger on Titanic! Victoria told them about life onboard the ship across the three classes. They got to explore a steamer trunk filled with artefacts from 1912 and had to try and work out what their uses were. As you can see, some of the children got to try on clothes from the early 1900s. Definitely not as comfy as our tracksuit bottoms and half zip!



BELLAGHY REGENERATION WORKSHOP:

As many of you are aware, Mid-Ulster Council are consulting with the Bellaghy community to decide how they envision Bellaghy developing over the coming years. The Paul Hogarth Company who are developing an exciting new Regeneration Strategy for Bellaghy, invited P6 to participate in a Workshop in Seamus Heaney HomePlace. The children were given the opportunity to express their views on future plans for Bellaghy. They had lots of fantastic ideas!



DEVELOPING LIFE SKILLS THROUGH SPORTS

Sport within St Mary's gives the children an opportunity to be active which has many benefits on their physical, social and mental health. We love encouraging children to be active and have fun. We are very grateful to Wolfe Tones Baile Eachaidh GAC for funding teacher Michael Gerard Doherty to take FMS skills development and thanks also to Cumann na mBunscol Doire, Derry GAA County Board and our local secondary schools for organising local tournaments.



CUMANN NA MBUNSCOL

We're very proud of our boys and girls!

We are delighted that the full Cumann na Bunscol Doire schedule is up and running this year. St Mary's are a very competitive bunch! Girls and boys donned the school sports shirts with pride in representing their school in the football and camogie games. They competed well and put up a brave fight. The boys made it through to the All County Indoor Football Finals, but were unlucky in their matches. We look forward to more competitions in term 3.



ST MARY'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL MAGHERAFELT CROSS COUNTRY

Children from P7 competed against local primary schools in an event hosted by St Mary's Grammar School. Conditions were heavy but the children demonstrated perseverance and determination. They all did very well and finished their races. Well done!



ST PIUS X COLLEGE MAGHERAFELT BASKETBALL

The Primary 6/7 were invited to compete in a primary tournament organised by St Pius X College Magherafelt. St Mary's had two teams so all got to take part. Huge thanks to St Pius College for organising a very well run tournament.



HALF TIME GAMES

Congratulations to Michael Scullion Cadhán Milne, Ciarán Milne, Cillian Molloy, Lilly Diamond, Marcie Rocks, Roise McGuckin who all performed so well in the Cumann na mBunscol Skills test.

These children will be selected to play in the half time during this year's Derry matches.

The Games are organised jointly by Cumann na mBunscol and Derry GAA County Board.



SENTINUS MICROBIT WORKSHOPS

CODING IN P6/7

P6/7 are learning all about microbits. Microbits are pocket sized computers which can be coded. The children have really enjoyed having Roy from Sentinus in to help them learn how to use them and to develop the language of coding. It is amazing to see children independently creating codes to solve problems.

They all really enjoy using them. Software developers of the future!

PE- LEARNING THE HAKA

Primary 4 have also been learning the HAKA, a traditional New Zealand Māori Dance as part of their Dance topic in PE. Keep your eyes peeled on Sports Day as they might even perform it to try and intimidate their opponents!

Check out their video on the school website!

<https://www.stmaryspsbellaghy.co.uk>

/

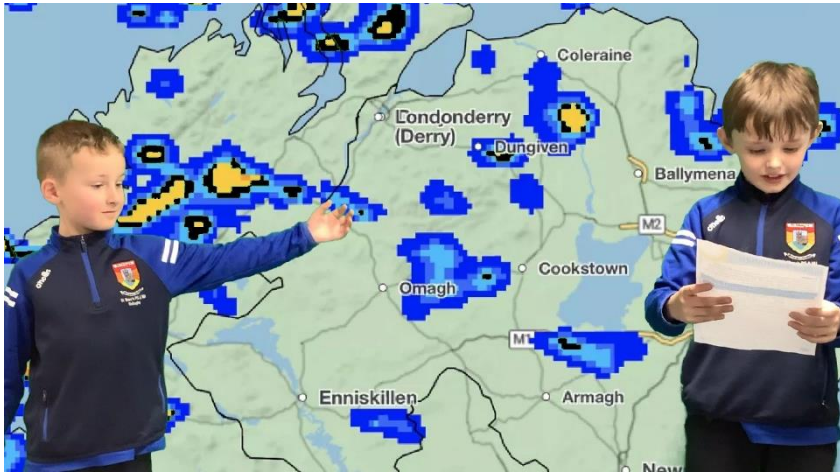


IT'S WORLD BOOK DAY!

WORLD BOOK DAY

Huge thank you to parents for making World Book Day such a success. The children's costumes were fantastic and we really appreciate the time and thought that went into organising face paints and props. There was a fun atmosphere in our morning assembly with lots of dancing and strutting! The favourite event of the day was the paired reading sessions when the older classes visited the younger classes to read stories.









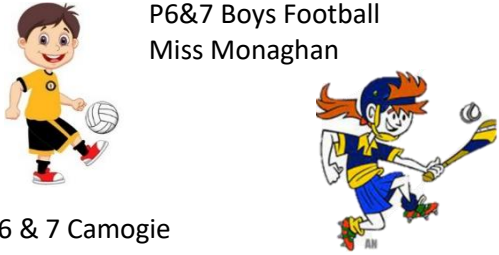


WEATHER WATCHERS

This term Primary 4 pupils have been working incredibly hard on their 'Weather Watchers' topic. They have even had the chance at being meteorologists where they researched, wrote a report and performed the weather forecast!

Watch out BBC, I think we have some future Barra Bests' on our hands!

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMME 2025

<p>Monday</p>	<p>P5 ICT Coding ICT Suite Pauline</p> 	<p>P3 & 4 Beginners Irish Dancing Miss Cassidy</p>  <p>15 places P3 prioritised</p>
<p>Tuesday</p>		<p>Choir P4-7 Mrs Fegan FREE</p> 
<p>Wednesday</p>	<p>P5, 6, 7 Table Quiz Cathy</p> 	<p>P4 & 5 Just Dance Mrs McCann & Megan</p> 
<p>Thursday</p>	<p>P4&5 Disco Bingo Zara</p> 	<p>P6&7 Boys Football Miss Monaghan</p>  <p>P6 & 7 Camogie Miss Lennon</p>

INFECTIONS AND SICKNESS

Please be reminded that children should not attend school if they have a tummy bug and wait 48 hours after their last vomiting or diarrhoea episode before returning to school. We continue to ask you to be vigilant and notify the school should you have any concerns.



HEAD LICE

Five tips to prevent head lice:

1. Comb and brush your hair everyday with your own comb or brush
2. Avoid sharing hats
3. Wear swimming caps at the pool and avoid sharing towels
4. Wear your long hair tied up
5. Let an adult check your hair and check the whole family weekly



St Mary's Primary School & Nursery School

25 Mullaghboy Road, Bellaghy, Magherafelt, Co Derry, BT45 8HX

Principal: Mrs Mary McCann BSc(Hons) PGCE PQH(NI)
Telephone: 028 7938 6360
Email: info@stmarysps.bellaghy.ni.sch.uk



Information for parents and guardians about the implementation of the new Personal Learning plan (PLP)

Guidance for parents and guardians of pupils who are currently on the SEN register

At St Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit, Bellaghy we currently create, implement, monitor and review an individual Education Plan (IEP) for every child who is placed on the school's SEN register. During the academic year 2025-2026, the school is beginning to roll-out the implementation of the new Personal Learning plan (PLP) which will replace the IEP which is maintained for your child.

Like the current IEP, the new PLP is a programme of special educational provision for every child identified as having SEN and for whom special educational provision is required. The PLP will describe your child's priority areas of need, the provision and teaching strategies being put in place to support them and what progress they have made as a result. Until the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (NI) 2016 is fully ratified and implemented by the Government, the PLP's will be a hard paper copy. The new electronic means of recording all of this information within a standardised template will be used by school when the SEND Act is fully statutory.

As a parent, you will continue to be involved and consulted within the PLP process in the same way that you currently are within the IEP process. It is important to be note that **provision being made for your child will not change as a result of the implementation of the PLP's in our school.**

If you have any queries about the PLP's please do not hesitate to contact the school SENCo Mrs McWilliams.



Board of Governors
Parent Representative

Oisín Milne

Thank you to everyone who supported our recent governor elections. It is fantastic to see such strong parental commitment in supporting our school. We wish Oisín well the role.

GET INVOLVED! JOIN ST MARY'S PTA

The next meeting of St Mary's PTA is at the school on

Thursday 3rd April 6.30pm

Join the PTA!

