



St. Francis' PS Aghaderg Back to School Newsletter



Welcome to the new school year at St. Francis' PS Aghaderg!

School Start and Finish Times

We want to welcome our pupils into their classrooms daily at 9am, ready to unpack and start learning. You can help us achieve this by ensuring your child is in before 9am. Our school gates open for all pupils at 8.45 am and any parents wishing to use breakfast club can do so from 8am daily, prebooking is essential.

P1: pupils finish at **12** (1st – 5th Sept);

12.45 (8th – 12th Sept)

2pm (15/9/25 onwards)

P2 & P3: finish at 2pm daily, Monday - Friday.

P4/5/6/7: finish at 3pm Monday – Thursday and **at 2pm on a Friday.**

This allows the school to accommodate staff Planning/ Preparation and Assessment time.

School wraparound services (Breakfast club and 123 club) begin 1/9/25 for P2- P7 and are only available via online booking.

Afterschool clubs offered by external coaches will begin 8/9/25.

PE uniform days

Your child's class teacher will inform you directly about the days your child should wear their PE uniform in via the school app.

Lunch and Snack Arrangements

In the interests of establishing good routines to help learning and focus, we operate a healthy break policy at St. Francis' PS. Children should bring a piece of fruit/ vegetable/ cheese/ crackers or a yoghurt. Please, to avoid upsets, do not send items which fall outside this list with your child(ren).

If your child has particular allergies or sensitivities, please provide up-to-date medical information to the school office so that our records and the school canteen can be informed.

We operate a nut-aware school and ask that all families **refrain from bringing nuts and nut-related food products to school** to ensure the safety of all pupils suffering from nut allergies and sensitivities.

Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures

We ask that all of our parents remain considerate of each other when parking to collect their children. To ensure the safety of our pupils and their families, drivers are not permitted to leave their vehicle/ park on the inner lane of the turning circle. This zone is clearly indicated with a double yellow line and signage on the roundabout.

P1 parents escorting their children are asked to park away from drop off zone so that they have time to see their children off properly, all other parents should use the drop off zone for pupils to exit the vehicle before promptly pulling away and allowing the next family to do the same.

We would also ask waiting families/ guardians and childminders to stand on the footpath and green area at home-time, leaving the drive clear for any moving vehicles. You and your children's safety are of paramount importance to us.

Attendance and Absence Reporting

If your child is unwell or has an appointment, please ring the school and leave a message either with Mrs Conlon or, outside of our operational hours, on our school voicemail. Alternatively, if you email info@stfrancis.aghaderg.ni.sch.uk it will be passed on to the relevant class teacher.

Communication with Parents

At St. Francis' PS we want our parents to feel welcome and know that we are approachable. If you have any questions or concerns, please call the office or send an email to our info@ email address and we will get back to you as soon as possible. We understand that you may wish to speak to a particular member of staff immediately, and in cases where you have safeguarding/ child protection concerns we will accommodate this as best we can. For any other issues we ask for your understanding as our staff may need to fulfill their supervision/ teaching responsibilities. I hope to be out at the entrance most mornings, so feel free to ask if you have any questions.

Communication with parents will mainly be provided via our school app and website with occasional paper copy letters. Please make sure our contact information for your household and any relevant carers is up to date and that you have the latest version of the SchoolsNI app with notifications enabled, so that you receive all information promptly.

Our menus, policies, calendars and holiday lists are accessible via the 'Parents' area of the school website.

Homework

In order to build on skills we are nurturing in school, we encourage pupils to complete homework set to a high standard and return it as per your child's class routine. Homework will always include reading and will usually include a written or practical activity. Some week's homework may have a particular theme (Anti-Bullying week for example) and we strongly encourage you to discuss these with your child(ren). If there are any specific issues or concerns around homework, please contact the school office to arrange a discussion with the class teacher.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Our Designated teacher for Child Protection is Mr O'Malley, and our current safeguarding team includes Mrs McKeown, Mrs Trainor and Mrs Woods, but all of our staff are trained in Child Protection and Safeguarding annually and vetted via enhanced Access NI processes.

If you are interested in supporting us by volunteering on school trips and school events, please email info@stfrancis.aghaderg.ni.sch.uk indicating your availability so that we can ensure you are confident around our safeguarding processes ahead of any possible events where you can assist us.

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

If at any point you develop concerns that your child may have additional Educational Needs, please contact your child's class teacher to discuss this. We are partners in your child's education and wish to support them as best we can.

Extra-Curricular Activities

At St. Francis' PS, we are keen to extend learning opportunities beyond the classroom and are proud to offer core and changing afterschool programmes.

Please remember, your child's afterschool coach will need to be informed directly of any medical, SEN, and pastoral care issues that may be important for them to know. For GDPR reasons, we cannot volunteer this information on your behalf so please ensure you provide relevant information via the forms each coach/ company send out and ensure contact information is up to date for anyone who might be collecting your child(ren).

Medical and Allergy Information

We want to ensure our school is a safe and happy place for all of our pupils so please provide us with updates regarding any changes to your child's medical information, including any historical medical issues, which may have implications for their learning and/ or their school experience. It may not seem relevant, but it is better to err on the side of caution so that we can be effective partners in your child(ren)'s wellbeing.

School Trips and Permissions

You will be issued with permission slips (paper/ digital e.g. Microsoft forms) to complete for trips off site. We will keep families updated around anything that might impact collection/ home times via our school app.

Digital Learning and ICT Use

At St. Francis' PS, we endeavour to prepare our pupils for the wider world by utilising digital resources and software to enhance and reinforce learning. This will mean that there will be occasional digital homework set. If your household has any particular considerations around computer/ tablet/ internet access that might affect this, please let us know.

Eco-Schools and Outdoor Learning

We are hoping to “reboot” and revitalize our Eco-Schools and Outdoor Learning environments and would love to enlist the skills and knowledge of any of our ‘handy’ or green fingered parents. If you or someone in your wider family circle enjoy gardening/growing/ landscaping and could offer a little time to help our green-minded pupils by sharing your knowledge, please give us a call on 02840628044.

Curriculum Meeting

We will hold Curriculum Meetings in September to give parents a chance to meet their child's class teacher and see their classroom for the year, offer a sense of what is covered in the year and discover some ways you can support your child to achieve their very best. If you have particular concerns, these are best discussed at an individual meeting. We will keep you informed of dates and times via our school website and app.

I would lastly like to wish all of our pupils, their families and our staff a great year ahead. If at any point you have a concern or need any advice/ support, please get in touch.

I am looking forward to welcoming everyone tomorrow, including the first of our Primary One pupils who begin their journey with us! I know the rest of the pupils and parents will join our staff in extending the warmest of welcomes to our new pupils and their families.

With my very best wishes for the year ahead,

Mrs S. McKeown

Principal