



St. Mary's Primary School,
67 Downpatrick Street,
Rathfriland,
Co. Down,
BT34 5DQ
Tel: 028 406 30630
www.stmarysrathfriland.co.uk

25th August 2023

Dear Parents,

I hope you have all had an enjoyable and relaxing summer. We are all looking forward to welcoming back our existing pupils and extend a warm welcome to our new pupils. We hope this will be a happy and enjoyable year. To that end I would appreciate if you would take the time to read carefully the following information.

P1

Thursday 31st August – Friday 8th September

8.55 am to 12 noon – they will enter the P1 classroom from the playground. Parents may accompany the P1 children to the classroom on the first day but please allow them then to enter independently after this.

Children will be collected from the **buzzer door up until Friday 8th September and after this, from the playground gate.**

From Monday 11th September – Please see the exit times below.

P2 – P7

Return to school on Friday 1st September.

Collection Times – Monday to Thursday	Collection Times – Friday
1.55 pm P1 children	1.50 pm – P1 & siblings
2.00 pm P2/3 children	1.55 pm – P2/3 & siblings
3.00 pm P4, P5 and P6/7 children	2.00 pm – P4, P5 and P6/P7

Please ensure you have informed the teacher if there is a change to who is collecting your child/children.

P1 – P4 children must be collected from the playground gates where they will wait with their class teacher.

P5-P7 - Please speak to your child about their return to home arrangements eg walking, being collected etc.

Playground

The Playground is supervised from 8.40 am to 8.55 am each morning by a member of staff. Please do not send your children into the yard before 8.40 am.

Bringing dogs to school

In the interests of pupil and parent comfort and safety we would appreciate if dogs are not brought on to the school site.

Contact Details

It is essential that you provide the school with up to date contact details and especially the main contact number for the text messaging service. To ensure we have your up to date details, **new Data Collection Forms will be sent home in the next week** (not P1 pupils as they have filled these out very recently).

Attendance

The pupils' attendance rate for 2022/23 was 91.9%. Well done to parents and pupils for striving to keep attendance as high as possible. 100% attendance is not our aim if this means children being in school when they are feeling unwell. However, it is very important that children are only kept off school when they are sick and strongly discourage parents from taking children out of school on holidays during term time.

Punctuality to school is extremely important. School begins at 8.55 am – when the children go into class the teacher spends time discussing what the day will bring and ensures a settling in time. If a child is consistently late each day, they miss this settling in time and may also miss the initial part of the first lesson – this is detrimental to a child's well-being and learning.

Appointments

If your child has an appointment in school hours, please let your child's teacher know in advance. If the appointment is first thing in the morning, please also let the teacher know if your child will return to school for lunch/dinner.

Early exits

If your child must leave school early, they must be picked up at the buzzer door.

Dinners

Dinners will be available from Friday 1st September. The menu has been posted on the website and the school Facebook page – it is a one choice menu.

Please check what is on the menu for each day to ensure it is something your child will eat. Children returning to class without an adequate meal does not lead to effective learning or well-being.

The cost of dinners remains at £2.60 per day. Please pay dinner money **ONLY ON FRIDAY**.

Lunches – please ensure your child has their lunch with them when they arrive at school to prevent unnecessary return trips from parents with lunches.

Please inform school as necessary re: allergies or special dietary requirements by Wednesday 30th August before 3 pm.

Breaktime Snacks/Lunches/Water Bottles

In St. Mary's PS we implement a Healthy Breaks Policy – this consists of water (not flavoured), pieces of fruit/vegetables. Crackers, fruit yoghurts etc do **not** form part of Healthy Breaks.

Uniform

Please ensure all items of uniform have name labels. Visit the O'Neills Online Shop for school half zip top etc (these are optional) - can be found on the school website under PARENTS.

PE

PE Uniform will be required on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. If a class are attending swimming they will have 2 other days for PE – the teacher will let them know.

DOWN GAA Coaching in Key Stage 2 will be continuing in school this year –the children gained a great deal from this last year. I have not received notification of the coaching day or coach to date. This coaching costs the school £10 per child. Last year the joint Bingo fundraiser funded this. With a decreasing budget this may be difficult to maintain – we look forward to working with the Parent Support Group to help finance this.

After School Clubs –

Burns Skills – Gaelic – Monday 2- 3 pm – P1/2/3 3-4 pm – P4/5/6/7 – begins Mon 11 Sept

Burns Skills – Soccer – Tuesday 2- 3 pm – P1/2/3 3-4 pm – P4/5/6/7 – begins Tues 12 Sept

Burns Skills – Basketball – Wednesday 2- 3 pm – P1/2/3 3-4 pm – P4/5/6/7 – begins Wed 13 Sept

P7 Transfer Club – Thursday 3 – 4.30 pm – begins Thurs 7 Sept

Guitar for P4/5/6/7 – from early October. These are open to existing pupils and also new pupils. Please contact Ms Phillips lphillips321@c2kni.net for more information.

Swimming

P6/7 will begin swimming on Tuesday 5th September. The cost will remain at £4 for the present. Swimming is part of the PE Curriculum and not optional.

Child Protection and Safeguarding

Mrs. L Farrelly is the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and Mrs. J. Fitzpatrick is the Deputy Designated Teacher.

Flu Vaccination

This will take place on Tuesday 3rd October 2023.

Curriculum Meetings

Curriculum Meetings will take place on the dates below in classrooms:

- P1 – Tuesday 12th September at 2 pm
- P2 – Monday 11th September at 2 pm
- P3 – Wednesday 13th September at 2 pm
- P4 – Wednesday 13th September at 3 pm
- P5 – Tuesday 12th September at 3 pm
- P6/7 – Thursday 14th September at 3 pm

I would encourage you to attend these meetings as the teachers will be providing important information about the year ahead, explaining how various strategies are used in class, information on what you can do to help your child at home and to provide you with an opportunity to ask any questions you may have.

Parent/Teacher Meetings

Face to Face Parent/Teacher Meetings will take place in the week beginning Monday 23rd October after school each day. Individual teachers will be in touch closer to the time.

Teacher Emails

Teachers can be contacted directly:

Mrs. Fitzpatrick – jfitzpatrick072@c2kni.net

Mr. Donnan – ndonnan694@c2kni.net

Miss Walsh – twalsh705@c2kni.net

Mrs. Farrelly – lfarrelly837@c2kni.net

Miss McConville – mmcconville950@c2kni.net

Mr. Gribben – dgribben473@c2kni.net

St. Mary's Parent Support Group

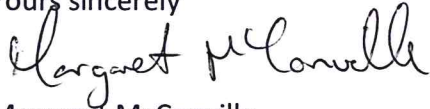
The Parent Support Group meets about three times a year to organise various fundraisers and events, with the first meeting usually taking place in September.

The fundraising activities enable the school to access resources for the children which would not be able to be financed from the school budget. If you would like to find out more about St. Mary's Parent Support Group, please watch out for the invitation on Facebook, school messaging service etc to the first meeting – we would love to have you on board!

A reminder that school is closed on Monday 25th September for staff training.

Thank you for your support and co-operation and I look forward to us all working together to make the incoming year a successful and happy one.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Margaret McConville". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'M' and 'C'.

Margaret McConville