



AUTUMN BULLETIN SEPTEMBER 2025

Welcome – A warm welcome to everyone and especially our new P1 pupils. We hope you all had a relaxing and enjoyable summer break.

HOME / SCHOOL COMMUNICATION: Positive and regular home school communication is at the core of our ethos. We continue to invest heavily in Seesaw and www.stmarysps.com, to keep parents informed and offer a window into school life. Seesaw is particularly valuable in offering a conduit for two-way information sharing between home and school. Please make use of these apps.

Recently the Department of Education, employing authorities, sectoral support bodies, and teacher unions have jointly acknowledged the increasing demands placed on school-based staff. In support of staff wellbeing and to help manage workload effectively, schools have been asked to clearly remind parents of the agreed procedure for communication, which should be within normal operating hours. Staff are not in a position to discuss specific school issues outside of these agreed procedures.

At St Mary's:

Key information can be accessed through Seesaw or www.stmarysps.com. Other **administrative matters** can be directed to Sarah in the school office, via Seesaw, by email at info@stmarysntb.newtownbutler.ni.sch.uk or by telephone at 02867738690.

Curriculum and Pastoral issues should be directed to the class teacher. Parents can contact the school office to request a call back or meeting, or they can contact teachers directly via Seesaw.

Safeguarding and SEN matters should be directed to Mrs G Fitzpatrick. Where Mrs Fitzpatrick is not available, Mrs Kelly and Mrs Corless are the Deputy Designated teachers for Child Protection.

Where further discussion is required or matters need to be escalated, parents can contact school to arrange a phone call or meeting with Mrs Kelly.

Please be aware that staff will respond to Seesaw messages during their working hours and teachers will not be available for communication with parents during teaching time.

If you have an urgent issue, please call the school directly.

PUPIL WELLBEING:

We are pleased to share that we continue to develop our focus on pupil wellbeing. Last year St Mary's was identified by the Department of Education, as an example of good practice for other schools across Northern Ireland. We have embraced Nurture and Trauma Informed Practices and received the Autism Impact and Being Well, Doing Well Awards. Four teachers are currently being trained in the Beyond Bricks Lego Based Resilience Programme and we intend to roll this out to P2,3,5 and 7 this year. Mrs R Fitzpatrick is also being trained in 'Roots of Empathy' and we plan to deliver that programme to a younger class later in the year.

IRISH LESSONS:

In recent years we have provided Irish Tuition for P6 and 7 through our Extended Schools Cluster. This year we have also secured funding from FODC to extend lessons through the year and include P5. We are also keen to promote the language among parents, we will share upcoming information on evening Adult Classes in Lisnaskea on our website.

CONCUSSION:	If a child has suffered a knock on the head outside school, please make us aware, so that we can take the necessary precautions to address any possible secondary concussion.
RAISING READING STANDARDS:	We have implemented several strategies to promote reading and raise standards, such as Accelerated Reading and Paired Reading. This year St Mary's has been successful in an application to run a Pilot Digital Reading Programme (AMIRA) with the Department of Education. We look forward to sharing more information during the year, on how this will benefit our pupils as an additional resource to enhance reading skills.
ABSENCES:	Parents should report absences via the button on our website homepage. Reasons for absences must be noted on our computer system and will be accessible to the Education Welfare Officer. While this seldom occurs, we are obliged to refer to the Welfare Service when pupil attendance drops below 85% (28 days in the year, the equivalent to almost 6 weeks absence).
AFTER SCHOOL PROVISION:	<p>You will have received our newly devised After School Policy. This relates to the wide range of provision we offer, in addition to the statutory primary curriculum. Please note that some key changes will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All places must be booked <u>5 school days</u> in advance. • We have introduced our first price increase in 8 years. From Monday 22nd September the cost will be £2 per half hour.
BEHAVIOUR:	<p>St Mary's prides itself on being a friendly, caring school where bullying behaviour is not tolerated. Our Anti-Bullying Policy, reflects the most recent legislation and like all core policies, is available on the website (password: <i>bekind</i>) or from the school office. There is a rolling preventative Addressing-Bullying programme in place in all classes (including online bullying) and from time-to-time additional assemblies, workshops and other events are provided. If you as parents have any worries or concerns about your child's well-being, please do not hesitate to see the class teacher. Allegations of bullying are taken seriously; the NI Anti-Bullying Assessment Matrix is used to address concerns and formal records are maintained.</p> <p>Please note that Golden Time is used as a behaviour management strategy from P3-7. Pupils who achieve 100% Golden Time will be awarded a certificate at the end of each half-term. As part of our restorative practice, Think Time Discussion Sheets will be sent home with pupils for a parental signature following incidents of unacceptable behaviour.</p>
MEDICINES:	It is our policy that medicines should not be administered by school staff, except in cases where a care plan has been agreed for long-term medication. Please do not send antibiotics, cough mixture, pain relief etc. with children.
HEALTHY EATING:	<p>We continue to promote our healthy eating policy and ask that children bring only fruit or other healthy snacks for break. We ask that packed lunches also contain healthy food. We will continue to offer toast each morning, as well as brunches or snacks to classes on occasion through the Fare Share programme. Parents will be notified through Seesaw when classes are to be offered these.</p> <p><u>NO CHOCOLATE, CRISPS OR EVEN TRACES OF NUTS OF ANY KIND IN BREAKS OR PACKED LUNCHES PLEASE!!</u></p>
PUPIL VOICE:	We are very keen that the children's voice is considered in school decision making and that they learn the processes and benefits of democracy. P5-7 pupils are currently running elections for the School and ECO councils, Wellbeing teams and Digital Leaders. New members will bring forward the views of their classmates. Co-ordinators will also continue to speak with representative groups of children to discuss various aspects of learning and teaching, to identify what's working well and what we could do better.

DINNERS: All dinners must be **pre-booked and paid** through the school money app.

UNIFORM: It is wonderful to welcome the pupils back in their full uniform, like a sea of blue and navy. Thank-you for ensuring that the children wear plain navy trousers / shorts without emblems or stripes. Following the uniform code is part of respecting the rules of our school and should be adhered to as such. It is **VERY IMPORTANT** that each item of uniform be **clearly marked** with the child's name. We welcome donations of unwanted, clean uniform. This will be offered for reuse through our <https://stmarysps.sumupstore.com/>

IMPORTANT DATES:

SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER
10 th September Whole School Mass	Fortnight Beginning 6 th NSPCC Speak Out Stay Safe online sessions for each class
18 th P1 stay in school until 1.55pm	
29 th Staff Development Day (Pupils do not attend)	Week Beginning 11 th - Maths Week Ireland
	24 th October - Halloween Fun Dress-up Day
	27 th -31 st School Closed for Mid-Term break
November - 4 th Flu Vaccine, 17 th School Photo	
Week beginning 10 th November – Antbullying Week	
December – 16 th Pantomime Trip (Beauty and the Beast in Armagh Theatre) for P3-7	

CHECK OUT THE CALENDAR ON OUR WEBSITE FOR FURTHER UPDATES ON SCHOOL MASSES, SACRAMENTS, CORE KIDS, GAELIC COACHING, AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS, IRISH, VIOLIN, PIANO, GUEST SPEAKERS, TRIPS ETC

Annual Curriculum Information Meetings for Parents:

	Parents	Time	Location
Wednesday 17th September	P7	1.30pm	Your child's classroom. Please enter school via the church carpark.
	P5	2.15pm	
Thurs 18th September	P1	1pm	
	P3	2.15pm	
Tues 23rd September	P2	1.30pm	
	P4	2.15pm	
Wed 24th September	P6	2.15pm	

We aim to work closely with parents and again ask you to contact us about any queries or concerns you may have. I wish one and all a happy and rewarding school year, with all our pupils working to the best of their ability, respecting each other, and enjoying all aspects of school life.

Mrs. P Kelly
PRINCIPAL



Parking at school



Children who are collected by car will exit through the church gate, to reduce the roadside danger at bus times.

Please do not park at the bus stop when collecting children.



For the safety of pupils, we ask that the school car park is reserved for staff and disabled access only.

We all want to ensure that all pupils can enter and exit school in the safest possible manner.