

St. Mary's Primary School

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Newsletter

24th January 2022

Dear parents, carers, staff and friends,

New Home-School-Community Liaison Teacher

We are very lucky to welcome Kate McCaughey into the role of Home-School-Community Liaison teacher this month as Katie Collins begins her maternity leave. Our HSCL teacher has a unique and special job, working alongside parents, carers and teachers to ensure the children are getting the very best support we can offer them.

Kate has been busy introducing herself to many of you – if you aren't sure who she is or would like to chat – just ask! You can always contact Kate by phone, text or WhatsApp on the HSCL phone – 085 103 5456.

Staff changes

We send our best wishes to Ms Hayes, Ms Collins and Ms Conlon who have all started their maternity leaves this month. We look forward to hearing their special news soon!

We welcome back Ms Kilkenny who has been on her maternity leave and will be supporting the 6th Class team. Ms Roche and Ms Tovar joined us in November and have moved into new roles since January supporting 3rd and 4th Class. We are delighted to welcome them to our team.

Like lots of workplaces, we have been experiencing staff shortages. It is possible that due to shortages we have to close a class, or several classes. While this will be a last resort, the reality over the last few months has been that finding substitute teachers in primary schools across the country has been almost impossible and our team of support teachers have regularly had to cover classes instead of their usual work. This has led to all children missing out on valued additional teaching support in literacy and maths and our most vulnerable children who need additional teaching support not receiving the specialised

support they need. In cases where we do need to close whole classes, we will do our best to communicate these decisions to you as quickly as possible and will provide online learning for whole classes who have to stay at home. Unfortunately, we cannot provide online learning for individual children isolating.

European Language Label Award Video

In November, we were awarded the European Language Label Award by Léargas. We had the opportunity to film a special video that showcases the work that we do to share children's home languages and to celebrate the diversity of our community. You can watch the video on our website – www.stmarysprimaryschool.ie It's on the front page – you can't miss it!

Visit from School Inspector

We had a visit from our school inspector from the Department of Education, Sinead Patten, in November. She visited a number of classrooms to observe teaching and learning. I am pleased to let you know that she was very impressed with what she saw and had lots of very positive feedback for our teaching teams. She enjoyed speaking to the children about their learning and was delighted with their excellent learning behaviour. She also conducted a Level 1 Child Safeguarding Check and a Level 1 Anti-Bullying Check, which looks at our procedures and policies in relation to keeping children safe and maintaining positive relationships. She particularly noted our initiatives to involve the children in school teams and our work on inclusion and diversity.

Parent Teacher Meetings

Thank you to all of the parents/carers who met with our teaching teams in November and December for our annual parent-teacher meetings. If for any reason you didn't get a chance to meet your child's teacher, please call the office and we will arrange an appointment for you.

Christmas Thanks

Our sincere thanks to our local St Vincent de Paul and the Grangegorman ABC programme for supporting some families in need with food



vouchers over the Christmas period. We are very grateful for their support.

Covid-19 Updates

We are experiencing high numbers of children and families with Covid19 at the moment.

While we are delighted so many of the restrictions in society are beginning to lift, schools have been asked to continue all of our protective measures until the end of February.

We have purchased HEPA air filters for each classroom to support our good ventilation practices. We know classrooms are colder because of the need to keep some windows open, but we are doing our very best to keep everyone as comfortable as possible.

The symptoms of Covid19 that we need to be looking out for are fever, cough, loss of sense of smell/taste, sore throat, headache, diarrhoea, fatigue, and any of those with a runny nose. Please keep your child at home if they have these symptoms and contact your GP for advice if they get worse. Children should be 48 hours symptom-free before returning to school.

We will continue to let you know if there is a case in your child's class so that you can be especially careful, but children will continue to come to school as normal unless they display symptoms. The current isolation period is 7 days, with extra care needed, including wearing a mask, for the 3 days after that.

Covid Vaccination for Children - HSE

A reminder that the HSE are rolling out a programme of Covid19 vaccinations for children aged 5-11. If you would to register for an appointment, go to <https://vaccine.hse.ie/>

If you have questions or concerns about the vaccine, you are advised to talk to your GP or medical professional who can help you to decide. If you need any further support or we can help in any way, please do just ask.

Confirmation and Communion

Well done to the Confirmation children who attended our Family Mass yesterday in the Church. The next one is on Sunday, 13th February for the First Communion children – but of course, all are welcome!

Attendance and punctuality

Having good attendance is a big challenge with Covid19 and not always possible. The most important thing is that children are in school every day that they are well, and do not miss school for reasons other than genuine illness.

Appointments (for children or parents), visits to family, birthdays or other social occasions, are not good reasons for children to miss a day of school. Please schedule these for outside of school hours.

Dates for your diary

13 February – Family Mass in the Church for children making their First Communion
21 – 25 February – Mid-Term Break, school closed
17 and 18 March – Bank Holidays, school closed
8 April – School closes at 12 noon
11-22 April – Easter Holidays – school closed
25 April – School re-opens
2 May – Bank Holiday – school closed
6 and 7 June – School holiday – closed

And finally...

I wanted to let you all know that I am expecting a baby in May. I am hoping to work until the Easter holidays and then I will be leaving you in Ms Brophy's very capable hands for a few months. We will continue to work closely together over the next while so that the school continues to run smoothly. And of course, our very talented staff team will all step in and step up to cover what needs to be covered and I know you will be very well looked after.

Best wishes,

Éadaoin Kelly
Principal