



St. Mary's Primary School

20 Cloughcor Road, Ballymagorry, Strabane, Co. Tyrone. BT82 0BE.

Telephone No: 028 7184 1237

Principal: Mrs A Devine

Monday 1st March 2021

Dear Parent / Person with Responsibility,

Please find details regarding starting back arrangements.

KEY DATES	ARRANGEMENTS
Mon 22nd Feb – Fri 5th Mar 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- All pupils taught remotely via Google Classroom. Please use PACK 3. It has already been provided to all pupils.- School remains open for keyworker/vulnerable children (8.45-2pm).
Mon 8th Mar – Fri 19th Mar 2021 (excluding 17th March when school will be closed for St Patrick's Day)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- P1-P3 to return to school (8.45am-2pm). Yellow and white EA Transport buses will be running in the morning but will not be picking P3 pupils up at 2pm.- All pupils on site will be getting out at 2pm each day.- Translink will be operating during these dates. Gerard will be there at the usual stops and will collect pupils at 2pm. Please ensure your child wears a face mask on the bus. Thank you!- P4-P7 taught remotely via Google Classroom. PACK 4 to be collected on Friday 5th March from 9.30-2pm for P4-P7 Pupils. <p>Pupils should wear school uniforms to school and sports/P.E. gear every Wednesday.</p>
Mon 22nd March – Fri 26th Mar 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Pupils will be taught remotely via Google Classroom.- School remains open for keyworker/vulnerable children (8.45-2pm)
Mon 12th Apr – Fri 2nd Jul 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- School reopens for Term 3 for all pupils P1-P7.- <u>Collection Times:</u> 8.45-2pm – P1/P2 8.45-2.50pm – P3/P4 8.45-2.55pm – P5/P6 8.45-3pm – P7



As ever the above dates are very much subject to change and may be adjusted accordingly to reflect any new changes that the Executive may agree on.

World Book Day 2021!

Thursday 4th March 2021 is World Book Day and although we won't be at school on this day, we still plan to celebrate this very special event. Teachers will have posted details of the Potato Challenge on to their Google classrooms.

DRESSING UP

If you have an old costume at home, we would ask that your child dresses up in his/her favourite book character/nursery rhyme character. Please note that this is **OPTIONAL**. I do not want, nor do I expect any parent to go out and buy a costume!! If you wish for your child to dress up, please take a photo and upload it on to your child's Google Classroom and we'll showcase the photos on our school Facebook page. Thank you!

MyOn

We ask that all pupils log on and read **at least one book** week beginning Monday 1st March-Friday 5th March. You can access MyOn on: www.myon.co.uk. Please log on using the username and password provided on the front of Pack 3. Thank you!

Thursday 4th March P4 and P5 pupils will be doing a virtual workshop with Michelle from Ink Wing Academy. Michelle worked with these year groups last year in our Shared Education Project with Bready Jubilee and Artigarvan P.S. We thought it would be a great idea to log on using the link provided on the P4/P5 Google Classroom. P4/P5 pupils will get the chance to see their peers and complete the activity with Michelle. You must have downloaded Zoom beforehand in order to access the workshop. All details have been provided on the P4 and P5 Google Classrooms.



REMOTE LEARNING SURVEY

Sincere thanks to all our parents for completing the remote learning survey I issued before Mid Term. We received 105 responses! Please see some of the feedback I received.

ITEM	
Total Responses	105
Access to Devices	84% have access to laptop/tablet/desktop.
Access to Devices	1 person responded that they did not have access to any device.
Average number of Engagement Days	100 responded 5 days / 2 for 4 days / 3 for 3 days.
Hours spent	40 at 7 hours / 31 at 3 hours / 25 at 2 hours / 9 < 2 hours.
Amount of Work	79% manageable / 11% slightly overwhelmed.
Barriers	54 distractions at home / 39 lack of motivation / 33 lack of parent time.
How useful do you find Google Classroom	62% extremely useful / 26% somewhat useful / 10% neutral.
How useful do you find Mathletics	65/105 extremely or somewhat useful / 23/105 not applicable.
Child Wellbeing	77/105 child coping well / 20/105 showed signs of stress.
Which elements of home learning worked best	Variety of activity, teacher feedback, online platform.
Amount of work	92% said it was about right.
Know how to get support	97% yes



PARENTAL COMMENTS

- Applaud organisation and consistency – golden time, surprise, one task free afternoon.
- Welcomed feedback from teachers – lovely comments
- Parent upskilling in ICT (one parent).
- Need to see Class Teacher
- Been very proactive in our approach when other schools hadn't embraced remote learning.
- Handout system works.
- Videos of Teachers motivated pupils and increased engagement.
- Consider other platforms e.g. See-Saw (one parent)
- When pupil see Teachers it helps the remote learning experience.

PARENTAL SUGGESTIONS

- More Videos of Teachers so that pupils can see, hear and respond.
- Keep motivation going by engaging in Google Meet.
- Face to Face Interaction.
- Voice over PowerPoints welcomed. Helps with engagement and understanding and gives a closer connection.
- Further Training in AR (one parent)
- Treats – Incentives for work (one parent)
- Reading books (one parent)

I know you are all very grateful for the fantastic work our teachers are doing at present in delivering remote learning to our pupils and we are very thankful to you for the positive feedback we received. Expectations are high and there's certainly nothing wrong with high expectations but I think it is fair to say that expectations must be realistic especially in the current climate. As I mentioned earlier, schools have not been given a COVID-19 handbook. School Leaders, in conjunction with school staff, have had to look at their school context, staff skills, training needs, time required, along with supervised learning and remote learning requirements in order to deliver a model of provision.

I have shared the parental comments and possible suggestions with our teachers and as a result two tasks Literacy/Numeracy will be set every Friday. Pupils will be asked to spend a Friday afternoon doing an activity they like doing. It can be their Golden Time! I aim to host a Google Meet session with specific classes towards the end of the week for our P4-P7 pupils. A link will be put up on the P4-P7 classes with instructions.



Reading books are precious resources and if I am entirely honest with you I am somewhat reluctant to send reading books home as some classes share books and we simply don't have enough. I asked parents to return reading books after the first lockdown and we got very little returned leaving huge gaps in our reading scheme. In addition, we have been advised to keep the rate of transmission as low as possible so I invested in the MyOn resource. As previously mentioned this resource will be extremely beneficial for your child. It has 6,000 EBooks available for pupils. I would strongly encourage our pupils to explore the variety of reading material on offer as I know that everyone will find something of interest to them.

Pupils in P1-P3 can log onto www.myon.co.uk and enter the usernames and passwords issued at the front of PACK 3 to access reading material. Pupils in P4-P7 can log onto www.myon.co.uk using the usernames and password they already have for Accelerated Reading. They are able to read EBooks and complete quizzes so that they can reach their AR targets.

DINNERS

Helen, Ruth and Sinead will be providing school dinners for those in receipt of free school meals in P1-P3 and for those children wishing to buy dinner whilst at school from Monday 8th March – Friday 19th March. Dinners cost £2.60. Please ensure correct money is put in an envelope, clearly labelled.

P7 ADMISSIONS

The Post Primary Admissions Process opens for our P7 pupils transferring to Secondary School today 1st March. Please note that this is not a first come, first served basis! I will post a video on the P7 Google Classroom to explain the process and how to access the Admission site this week. Please ensure you log on to your child's Google Classroom for details.

Confirmation

Confirmation will take place on **Saturday 8th May @ 11.00am** for our P.7 pupils at Sacred Heart Church, Derry Road, Strabane.

First Holy Communion

First Holy Communion will take place on **Saturday 22nd May @ 11.00am** for our P4 pupils at the Sacred Heart Church, Derry Road. More details will follow.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs Andrea Devine
SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

