

St. Mary's Primary School Cabragh

10 Whites Road, Cabragh, Dungannon, Co. Tyrone, BT70 3AN

Telephone: (028) 8776 7356

Principal: Mrs Louise Quinn



24 July 2023

Dear Parent/Guardian,

It is hard to believe that we are almost half-way through our summer holidays! I hope you and the children are all doing well and enjoying the summer break.

I would like to begin this update by paying tribute to the hard work and dedication of our school staff. I would also like to thank you for your continued support of the school and most importantly I would like to thank the children. They have been a credit and I am immensely proud of each and every one of them.

Home/School Communication

St Mary's strives to maintain close liaison with parents, and we greatly value the close partnership we have with our parents. To keep parents informed of important updates, we regularly use the school's texting service, the school website, <https://www.stmaryscabragh.com/home/> and the school Facebook page. Each month parents will also receive a Calendar and Newsletter with key information and important updates. It is important that parents keep these safe and make note of important events, including dates and times of After-school Clubs etc.

PLEASE NOTE: The school mobile phone is primarily a **one - way system** and is used for sending important notifications to parents/guardians. The school mobile phone is not regularly monitored and we kindly request that parents who wish to contact the school avoid texting the school mobile and telephone the school office on 028 877 67356 instead. We thank you for your support with this matter.

At St Mary's, appointments must be made if a parent wishes to see a class teacher or the school principal. Please contact the school secretary **028 877 67356** to make an appointment if you wish to see a particular class teacher or the school principal.

We also kindly request that phone calls to staff members are made **before 3:30 pm.**

Safeguarding and Child Protection

In the interest of Child Protection / Security and to avoid unnecessary disruption to class teaching, parents and visitors **MUST** report to the Secretary's office. Parents should not go beyond the school entrance foyer unless accompanied by a member of staff.

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New School Term 2023-2024

School will reopen on Thursday 31st August 2023, for an induction morning for Primary 1 and Primary 7 children only, 9:30 -11:00 am. The P1 and P7 children should wear their school uniform to school and may bring a snack. School dinners and school buses will not be available on Thursday 31st August.

School will re-open for all classes (P1-P7) on Friday 1st September 2023.

We are delighted to announce that Miss Claire Canavan was appointed as full-time permanent P5 teacher on Friday 30th June 2023. Please see the staffing complement for 2023-2024 below.

Staffing Complement 2023-2024

- **Principal** - Mrs Louise Quinn
- **Senior Leadership Team** - Mrs Eilís Kelly and Mrs Marie Poacher
- **Primary One** - Miss Lauren Cush (Class Teacher) and Mrs Katalin Quinn (Classroom Assistant)
- **Primary Two** - Mrs Eilís Kelly (Class Teacher) and Mrs Sheila Donaghy (Classroom Assistant)
- **Primary Three** - Mrs Marie Poacher (Class Teacher) and Mrs Jenna Quinn (Classroom Assistant)
- **Primary Four** - Mrs Donna Quinn (Class Teacher), Mrs Claire McKillion (Classroom Assistant) and Mrs Una Bloomer (Classroom Assistant).
- **Primary Five** - Miss Claire Canavan (Class Teacher), Mrs Catherine McElvogue (Classroom Assistant) and Mrs Kathryn Tierney (Classroom Assistant)
- **Primary Six** - Mrs Michelle McCann (Class Teacher) and Mrs Michelle Wallace (Classroom Assistant)
- **Primary Seven** - Mr Dermot Morrow (Class Teacher) and Mrs Margaret Rafferty (Classroom Assistant)
- **Secretary** - Mrs Paula O'Neill
- **Catering** - Mrs Melissa Pike, Mrs Maureen Kelly and Mrs Rita McGlinchey
- **Caretaker** - Mr Damien Hamill
- **Cleaner** - Mrs Katrina Lasyk

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Holiday List

Please see the school website for school closures 2023-2024. This may be subject to change.
<https://www.stmaryscabragh.com/cmsfiles/items/securedocs/Parentschool-calendar-2023-2024-.pdf>

Primary One New Entrants

The Primary One children will start school on Thursday 31st August 2023 as a whole class (9:30 - 11:00 am) We kindly request that parents pick up the children at 11:00 am sharp.

Friday 1st September – Thursday 7th September, the Primary One children will be phased into school in small groups.

Please refer to the inside of your Starting School pack to see which day your child should attend school. For example, if your child's small group day is Monday 4th September, then your child does not attend school on Friday 1st, Tuesday 5th, Wednesday 6th or Thursday 7th September.

The whole Primary One class will come together again on Friday 8th September.

The children will finish school early (12.30pm) 1st September – 29th September inclusive. Commencing Monday 2nd October, the children will go home at 1.30pm. School dinners will be available for your child commencing 1st September 2023.

P1 and P2 Afterschool

The P1 and P2 Afterschool is optional for P1 and P2 pupils. The Afterschool Club runs from 1:30 pm - 2:45 pm each day.

The Afterschool for **Primary 2 pupils** will commence on Monday 4th September 2023. This can be booked via the School Website. <https://www.stmaryscabragh.com/after-school/>

We kindly request that payment is made on a WEEKLY basis. It is the responsibility of parents to keep a note of the dates your child attends P1/2 Afterschool. Please mark your child's name on an envelope, indicate the days your child attended and enclose payment for the days attended that week. Payment MUST be made to the school office on a weekly basis. The school is dependent on prompt payment so we can employ and pay the Afterschool Leader. Thank you for your support with this matter.

The Afterschool for **Primary 1 pupils** will commence on Monday 2nd October 2023.

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Transport Application Form for September 2023

If your child is going to be travelling to and from school by bus in September 2023, an application form must be completed online.

<https://www.eani.org.uk/home-to-school-transport-new/transport-online-applications/primary-school-transport-applications>

Please note that there is no school bus at 1:30 pm for P1 and P2 pupils. However, if your child attends the Afterschool Club and they are eligible to travel on the bus, they may take the bus home at 2:45 pm.

Free School Meals/School Uniform/Physical Education Clothing Allowance Application

Parents **MUST** apply by **28th July 2023** for Free School Meals to be in place for September 2023. We encourage **all parents** to make an application

<https://www.eani.org.uk/financial-help/free-school-meals-uniform-grants/apply-for-free-school-meals-uniform-grants>

Who is eligible to apply for free school meals/school uniform/physical education allowance?

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) can apply if your son or daughter is in full-time education and if you are in receipt of one of the following benefits:-

- Income Support;
- Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance;
- Income Related Employment and Support Allowance;
- Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit;
- Child Tax Credit or Working Tax Credit with an annual taxable income of £16,190 or less;
- Universal credit and have net household earnings not exceeding £14,000 per year.

Or:-

- if you are an Asylum Seeker supported by the Home Office Asylum Support Assessment Team (ASAT); or
- if your child has a statement of special educational needs and is designated to require a special diet.

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School / PE Uniform

In St Mary's we have a school uniform and a separate PE uniform. Please see the school website. <https://www.stmaryscabragh.com/parent-area/school-uniform/>

Please ensure that all items of school uniform and PE uniform are clearly marked with your child's name.

PE Uniform - We are mindful of the cost to parents, so, to keep the cost of the **PE uniform** down, we allow the children to wear affordable **plain** navy leggings / **plain** navy tracksuit bottoms that can be purchased very cheaply in Tesco, Primark etc. The branded sweatshirt and polo t-shirt with the school logo can be purchased in **Horace Mc Mullan's, Scotch Street, Dungannon**. The blue polo t-shirt with the school logo is optional. A plain blue polo t-shirt is also acceptable.

School Uniform- PE uniform is not school uniform. In St. Mary's, we feel it is very important for the children to wear school uniform. Our school uniform embodies the ethos of St Mary's. On school trips, attendance at Feis and festivals etc, our children are always commended for their smart appearance and excellent manners. We want to instil these values in our children from the outset. We take pride in our children and their smart appearance in their school uniform. The wearing of school uniform also allows the children to get into the right mindset for the school day and the teaching and learning that takes place. The school jumper with the school logo and the striped tie can be purchased in **Horace Mc Mullan's, Scotch Street, Dungannon**.

I am pleased to announce that the **"School Uniform Exchange"** initiative will take place this summer. Please see the school website and School Facebook page for further information.

<https://www.stmaryscabragh.com/news/school-uniform-exchange/>

This brilliant initiative will help to cut down on the cost of purchasing school uniform.

Healthy Eating

St Mary's Primary School promotes healthy eating at school. Schools are monitored by the Department of Education to check that they are doing everything possible to promote healthy eating.

Lunch is an important meal for school going children. It should provide one third of their recommended daily allowance of nutrients without being high in fat, sugar or salt. It should also provide dietary fibre. Convenience foods like crisps, sweets, biscuits, chocolate and soft drinks are not permitted. Children should bring a water bottle or milk to school. Please see the school website <https://www.stmaryscabragh.com/parent-area/healthy-eating/> or click on the links below for some ideas.

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<https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes/>

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/school-packed-lunch-inspiration>

All children are allowed one small treat on a Friday. (EG- A fun size bar, Kit-Kat, Milky Way etc) We do not permit the children to bring in lollipops or packets of chewy sweets.

PLEASE NOTE:- We have a large number of children with life threatening nut allergies.
Please DO NOT send nuts to school with your child or foods that contain nuts.

School Dinners

School meals are cooked in the school kitchen. The canteen staff are committed to providing healthy and nutritious meals. Please note that **dinners MUST be paid for on a weekly basis.** School dinners can be booked and paid for via the SchoolMoney App. The school secretary will speak with new P1 parents on 31 August 2023 to advise on setting up SchoolMoney.

The dinner menu for Friday 1st September can be viewed on the school website.

<https://www.stmaryscabragh.com/cmsfiles/items/securedocs/WeekBeginnning28August2023.jpg>

The dinner menu for week beginning Monday 4th September 2023 can be viewed on the school website.

<https://www.stmaryscabragh.com/cmsfiles/items/securedocs/WeekBeginning4thSeptember2023.jpg>

Break-time Snacks

All children have a break at 10.30am. It is important that all children bring a daily snack to school for their mid-morning break. Children should bring a healthy snack (sandwich, wrap, crackers/cheese, fruit, carrot sticks etc.) High fat and high sugar content foods like crisps, sweets, biscuits, chocolate and soft drinks are **not** permitted.

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Time-Keeping

Time-keeping is extremely important in the education of your child and is a life-long learning skill. If your child is persistently late they are missing out on important learning opportunities at the start of the lesson. I would like to remind parents that **school begins at 8.45am.** Children may be dropped off at school from **8.30 am onwards.**

Arrival to school before 8.30 am is only permitted for the early bus children.

Commencing Friday 1st September, we will resume our daily whole school assemblies. It is vital that that all pupils attend for Assembly and prayers each morning at 8:45 am sharp. Staff members will be on duty in the Assembly Hall to receive the children **from 8.30 am onwards.**

For the month of September, Primary 1 children should go directly to the Primary 1 classroom. Staff members will be on duty on Thursday 31st August to direct parents and children to the new P1 classroom in the new building at the back of the school.

On Thursday 31st August children in Primary 1 and Primary 7 should go directly to their classroom.

Attendance

It is essential that your child attends school regularly and maintains a pattern of good attendance throughout their school career. Excellent attendance at school is important to allow a child or young person to fulfil their potential. Please see the school website for further information. <https://www.stmaryscabragh.com/parent-area/attendance/>

Family Holidays

You can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by **not taking holidays during term time.** Any child who is absent from school due to a holiday will miss out on important learning and will fall behind with their school work. In each Academic Year there are only a maximum of 190 statutory school days – this allows plenty of time for holidays to be arranged outside term time. Holidays taken during term time will be categorised as an unauthorised Key Point absence. Avoid taking family holidays during the school term.

We also request that parents try to keep medical appointments out of school hours.

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Attendance- How Parents Can Help

- Establish a good routine in the mornings and evenings so your child is prepared for the school day ahead.
- Make sure your child goes to school regularly and follows the school rules.
- Ensure your child arrives at school on time – not late.
- Arrange dental and medical appointments outside school hours when possible.
- Always inform the school if your child is absent due to illness – this must be followed up with a **written note** when your child returns to school. Please find a copy of the absence notification form on the school website. <https://www.stmaryscabragh.com/parent-area/attendance/>
- Take truancy seriously – if your child is not attending school as you expect they may be putting themselves at risk – Who are they with? What are they doing?
- Take family holidays outside term time.
- Talk to your child about school and take an interest in their school work (including homeworks).
- Attend parent evenings and school events.
- Praise and reward your child's achievements at school.
- Always support school staff in their efforts to control difficult or challenging behaviour.
- Discuss any problems or difficulties with the school – staff are there to help and will be supportive.

Please note- the **Absence Notification Form** must be completed for each period of pupil absence and returned to the class teacher immediately.

In the interests of safety, please telephone the school if your child is going to be absent or late before 9:00 am. We deem this to be a most important safety procedure.

A note / Absence Notification Form is always required on the child's return to school.

<https://www.stmaryscabragh.com/parent-area/attendance/>

Please note that the Education Welfare Officer regularly visits school to monitor attendance and punctuality.

Thank you for taking the time to read through this important newsletter and enjoy the rest of the summer holidays.

Yours sincerely,

Louise Quinn