

OUR LADY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

12 MILLTOWN ROAD
BENBURB, DUNGANNON
CO. TYRONE
BT71 7NJ

Tel/Fax: 028-37548237

Principal: Mr Tomás Mc Kee

E-mail: info@ourladys.tullysaran.ni.sch.uk

School Website - ourladyspstullysaran.com

Our Lady's P.S.



DECEMBER NEWSLETTER



Dear Parents/Guardians,

As Christmas approaches we are continuing to look forward to all the lovely Christmas activities we have planned for the children. Unfortunately, due to the current situation where we are seeing so many COVID cases within our local areas and the ongoing speculation in the media suggesting there may be more restrictions including a circuit breaker before Christmas, there remains a level of uncertainty over whether all our planned activities will go ahead. At the time of drafting this Newsletter the Department of Education has not communicated the intention for a circuit breaker prior to Christmas or a restriction on attending Christmas related events therefore we will proceed as planned unless we are informed to act otherwise. If for any reason the situation changes, we will inform you via text and the school website. Please regularly check our website and calendar for new information and updates.

NEW PUPILS IN 2022/23: Online applications for Reception and Primary One children via the Education Authority's website are available to complete from **Monday 10th January 2022 until 28th January 2022 (12 noon)**. The Department of Education has once again advised schools not to host Open Nights for prospective families and Reception/Primary One children. We will upload a short video on to our website later this month which will give parents a glimpse of life in our school with information included regarding the admissions process. We will also post an updated school Prospectus on to our website for prospective families to view. Please encourage all prospective parents/guardians to visit our website to learn more about our school. Parents/guardians can also contact the school to chat with me or arrange an appointment, to come and walk around our school.

DITCH THE DARK DAY: On **Friday 3rd December** we are hosting our annual 'Ditch the Dark Day' which is organised by Ms Loughran and our Eco/Student Council. Children are encouraged to walk to school or even from the Community Centre on Friday morning; they will be offered a hotdog or pancake when they come into school. They will also begin their journey to Santa as we continue to work with Sustrans to promote active travel. As this is a **non-uniform day** there is a charge of **£2 per child** with all **donations in aid of Aaron's 'Mission to Walk'**. Aaron is 5 years old and is a nephew of Mrs Arlene Oliver, our Primary One Classroom Assistant. Aaron was born with Cerebral Palsy and his family are raising money, for him to go to America for surgery. We hope to raise some funds to support Aaron's appeal.

ADVENT MASS: On Wednesday 8th December we will have a Mass for our Primary 4-7 pupils to mark the 'Feast of the Immaculate Conception'.

PANTOMIME TRIP (P5-P7): On Thursday 9th December P5, P6 & P7 pupils will attend 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' in the Grand Opera House, Belfast. An early dinner will be served before the children leave at 12 noon and they will return to school at 5 pm. Children will have to wear face coverings on the bus and in the theatre. A snack and drink will be provided for the children in the theatre. We hope to proceed with this event as the children are looking forward to it and deserve this treat. We will continue to review our arrangements and plans over the course of the next week in keeping with Government guidance.

CINEMA TRIP: On Friday 10th December Reception, P1, P2, P3 & P4 pupils will attend a private showing of 'Clifford the Big Red Dog' in the Armagh Omniplex cinema. The children will leave school @9.15am and they will return to school in time for dinner.

CONFESSIONS: On Tuesday 14th December P5-P7 pupils will attend Confessions in the school @9.30am.

RECEPTION & PRIMARY ONE CHRISTMAS PERFORMANCE: Our Reception and Primary One children will perform a short Christmas Nativity Play for their parents on Tuesday 14th December @11am in the 'Immaculate Conception Church, Tullysaran' (a maximum of two adults per child can attend and all adults must wear a face covering).

CHRISTMAS DINNER: Christmas dinner is scheduled for **Wednesday 15th December**. Children are invited to come to school in their own clothes wearing a Christmas jumper, hat or festive clothing (no charge for non-uniform). Christmas dinner will be served in the classrooms and children can be collected at the normal times. 123 Club and buses will be running as normal.

CHRISTMAS SONGS: Our P2-P7 classes are going to perform Christmas songs, which will be recorded on Wednesday 15th December, Christmas dinner day. We will post our Christmas songs on our school website over the course of the final days of the term (16th - 20th December). We hope the songs will bring some Christmas cheer to all our homes.

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS: Our school is scheduled to close on **Wednesday 22nd December @12noon** **(there will be no buses or dinners)**. This will also be a free non-uniform day. To ensure that there is not a large gathering at our school gate, at home time, on 22nd December: **Reception/P1 and P2 children will finish @ 11.30am, P3 & P4 will finish @ 11.45am and P5, P6 & P7 will finish @ 12 noon.** Children in Reception to P4 with older siblings in P3/P4 or P5-7 will be supervised in class until their older siblings are being collected @ 11.45 or 12 noon. Please remember to social distance in or around our school grounds. Thank you. School is scheduled to reopen for all children on **Thursday 6th January 2022**, with Breakfast and 123 Clubs operating as normal.

DINNER MONEY: Dinners continue to cost £2.60 per day and we would encourage all parents/guardians to use **Parent-Pay** to pay for dinners. All dinner money is paid to the Education Authority so it should be paid in advance. The Education Authority policy is that if dinner money is two weeks in arrears then the child(ren) should be refused dinner. We have also adopted a similar policy for attendance at our Breakfast and 123 Clubs so please ensure that all payments are made in advance as this is not a policy that we wish to implement. Thank you. If you are experiencing difficulty with making payments, please contact the school and we can make an arrangement to support you with your payments. The December Dinner Menu is available on ParentPay and our school website. **(Please Note - Nut Products, including seeded bread, are not allowed in school. Thanks.)**

HEALTHY SNACK: Children should bring a drink of water and a healthy snack (for break-time): fruit, pancake, sandwich, crackers with butter/cheese **(Not permitted: jam, chocolate, Nutella, peanut butter, sugary spreads etc.)** to school with them each day for break-time. We have noticed that some children are bringing cordial juice and other snacks into school. Cordial juice is only permitted at lunch time and cannot be taken during the school day. Children are only permitted to bring water and the above snacks to school for their break to ensure we promote a healthy and balanced diet. Thank you.

COVID-19: Please remember to social distance and wear a face covering in the school grounds. If your child(ren) is/are displaying any Coronavirus symptoms, please keep your child(ren) off school and organise a PCR test. If they test positive you will have to follow PHA guidance. If they test negative they can return to school as long as they are not displaying any COVID symptoms (high temperature, continuous cough and loss of sense of taste or smell). If a close contact of your child(ren) i.e. someone who lives with them tests positive for COVID you must keep your child(ren) off school and organise a PCR test. They can return to school as long as they test negative and have no COVID symptoms. If you are unsure if your child(ren) should attend school, please contact Mrs Comiskey or Mr Mc Kee and we will advise on the actions you should follow. Remember that if your child(ren) test(s) positive for COVID they will have to isolate for at least 10 days. The class teachers will then arrange work for your child(ren) via Seesaw or work can be collected from school if appropriate i.e. reading book. I would like to thank all families who have followed these guidelines over the past few months and thank everyone for

assisting the school in ensuring that we have been able to function as we have over the course of this term. It is very important that we continue to be vigilant during the winter months. Thank you.

REMEMBRANCE ASSEMBLY & STONES PROJECT: Our Primary 3 children have experienced a very busy November. Their 'Stones Project' which was covered in the Irish News Newspaper was a brilliant learning experience for all of the children as they learned about the importance of the role of the First Responders and Emergency Services. They also realised how small things like house numbers can play such a vital role in saving lives. On behalf of our school I would like to thank Aidan Early and Mrs Comiskey for organising this event for the children and congratulate all of the P3 children and staff for their wonderful work. Our P3 children also performed a beautiful Remembrance assembly where they remembered all their loved ones and all members of our school community who have passed away. May they Rest in Peace. The children performed their assembly in the Church and it was lovely to see so many family members there to participate in the assembly and support the boys and girls. A short movie will be uploaded on to our school website capturing some images from the assembly and pictures of the children with their special crosses. Well done to Mrs. Comiskey, Mr Mc Cann, Miss Duffy and all the P 3 pupils.

DROP OFF AND COLLECTION OF CHILDREN: As we enter the final month of the term, I would like to remind you about the importance of safety around the school in the morning and afternoon. Please ensure that you park and drive safely at drop off and collection times. Please, take your time, one or two minutes is not going to make a huge difference as you make your journey away from school. Please remember to be respectful of the properties that are in close proximity of the school grounds and do not turn in the driveways of local residents. Thank you. If you are running late, don't worry we will supervise children until they are collected although this should not be a daily occurrence. Morning drop off is usually better than the afternoon although I would remind all parents/guardians that children must not enter the school grounds until 8 am if attending Breakfast Club. All other children must not come to school until 8.40 am. If a child enters the school before this time they will have to attend Breakfast Club and whether they take breakfast or not there will be charge of £2.

PARENT-TEACHER MEETINGS: During the month of November all teachers contacted parents to facilitate parent teacher meetings. I hope all parents found the opportunity to speak with their child(ren)'s teacher(s) informative and beneficial. I would encourage parents to contact the school and speak to their child(ren)'s teacher, Mrs Comiskey or myself if you have any queries or concerns regarding your child(ren)'s progress. We aspire to do all we can to support every child's educational development. I would like to thank all the teachers for all their work in preparing for and facilitating parent teacher meetings.

I would just like to inform you that all staff have once again requested that parents/guardians do not purchase gifts for them this Christmas. We stress this without reservation. Staff appreciate the kindness shown to them over the years however we feel, parents/guardians have enough expenses throughout the year and we appreciate all the support you give to the school.

I must also inform you that our longest serving teacher and Vice-Principal, Mrs Comiskey has informed our Board of Governors that she will be retiring at the end of the school year. Mrs Comiskey is a highly respected and valued member of our school community who has always gone above and beyond to ensure every pupil has experienced a rich, fun, happy and fulfilling educational journey. She has demonstrated immense enthusiasm, energy, innovation and commitment alongside her amazing artistic and musical talent throughout her time in Our Lady's. Our whole school community will miss Mrs Comiskey greatly but we all wish her every joy and happiness in this new and exciting stage in her life. It has been an honour to work with and alongside Mrs Comiskey over the past few years. We will organise a farewell coffee afternoon for Mrs Comiskey in June to mark her excellent service to education in the Tullysaran and wider community.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of all staff and governors, to wish you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas.

Take care, stay safe and all the best.

Tomás Mc Kee

Mr Tomás Mc Kee
Principal