

## OUR LADY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Our Lady's P.S.



## JANUARY & FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER

Dear Parents/Guardians

Welcome to the start of a new year and a new academic term. I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of all staff, to wish you and your family health and happiness for 2022.

Unfortunately, Coronavirus and particularly Omicron is widespread, so it is very important that we rigorously implement our COVID protocols. 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 and contact the school. 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 complete a lateral flow test. They can return to school if they test negative, have no COVID symptoms and continue to complete lateral flow tests daily for ten days. If they test positive on a lateral flow test, they will have to isolate and you should organise a PCR test. Children under 5 do not have to take a PCR test unless advised by a doctor but should not attend school if they have COVID symptoms or have tested positive on a lateral flow test. 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 but children should not be coming to school if they are feeling unwell. Remember that if your child(ren) test(s) positive for COVID they may have to isolate for 10 days however if they have two negative lateral flow test results on days six and seven and have no COVID symptoms they may return to school. It is very important that parents contact the school before their child(ren) return to school to confirm that they have followed PHA guidance. Class teachers will arrange work for child(ren) via Seesaw, Mathletics or work can be collected from school if appropriate i.e. reading book(s) while they are isolating. I would like to thank all families who have already followed the guidelines and thank everyone for your anticipated cooperation during the next few weeks/months which could be very challenging for us all. It is imperative that we all work together to protect ourselves and others. Thank you.

**RECEPTION & PRIMARY ONE APPLICATIONS FOR 2022/23:** Online applications for Reception and Primary One children via the Education Authority's website ([www.eani.org.uk/admissions](http://www.eani.org.uk/admissions)) are available to complete from **Monday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022 until 28<sup>th</sup> 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 have posted a short video on our website which will give parents a glimpse of life in our school with information included regarding the admissions process and an updated school Prospectus 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

**DINNER, BREAKFAST & 123 CLUBS MONEY:** Dinner, Breakfast and 123 Clubs money should continue to be paid in advance and via ParentPay. Thank you.

**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, sugary spreads, Nutella, peanut butter, nut products 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.

#### **IMPORTANT DATES:**

**Reception & Primary One:** Admission applications are available online from 10<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> January.

**Catholic Schools Week:** Monday 24<sup>th</sup> January – Friday 28<sup>th</sup> January.

**Mid-Term Break:** Monday 14<sup>th</sup> February – Friday 18<sup>th</sup> February (inclusive).

**World Book Day:** Friday 4<sup>th</sup> March – non-uniform day.

**Green Day:** Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> March – non-uniform.

**School Closed:** Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> & Friday 18<sup>th</sup> March (St. Patrick's Holiday).

**First Penance (P4):** Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March @ 7pm in the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Tullysaran  
(Primary Four pupils and parents only can attend First Penance).

**Easter Holidays:** Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> April – Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> April (inclusive).

**Ceremony of Light (P7):** Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> May @ 7pm in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh  
(Only one parent can attend the Ceremony of Light with Primary Seven pupils).

**Holy Communion (P4):** Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> May @ 11am in the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Tullysaran  
(Primary Four pupils and parents only can attend First Holy Communion).

**Confirmation (P7):** Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June @ 2pm in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh  
(Primary Seven pupils, parents and one sponsor can attend the Confirmation Ceremony).

**SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT & ACTION PLAN TARGETS:** At the beginning of each school year, we establish targets that aim to create a safe and welcoming environment for all; improve children's progress and attainment; further develop communication with parents and the community; enhance our school building and grounds.

This year we have identified targets that we felt were important in response to the two periods of remote learning; analysis of standardised assessment results and feedback from parents, pupils and staff. Already we have carried out extensive work to our outdoor grounds which has included the installation of a shed, outdoor room, gravel pit, paved area and the purchase of a range of outdoor play equipment. We are also in the final stages of completing a covered sand and water play area. From the beginning of the year, we have introduced Relax Kids to our weekly schedule which focuses on improving children's resilience and emotions in fun and interactive sessions. All classes will experience Relax Kids during the school year. Our main learning focus is on effective questioning to improve children's learning experiences in all areas of the curriculum. Teachers and Classroom Assistants have participated in training, and we have agreed to trial strategies that are being implemented in school to promote effective questioning. This focus should improve the children's learning when talking, reading, writing, calculating and investigating. We continue to prioritise reading and have purchased Accelerated Reader for Key Stage Two. We plan to host a Key Stage Two parents evening, via Zoom, to explain to parents how this program will be implemented over the course of the next few years. During term two we will place a significant emphasis on Numeracy, aspects of which were identified as areas for attention in our standardised assessment results. We have focused on mental maths skills and have promoted the use of Mathletics to support children with their learning in Numeracy. During term two children will engage in more practical investigative activities and we will host a parents evening for Key Stage One parents. We have also loaned over twenty ICT devices to families to support children with online learning and we will continue to work closely with parents to ensure we provide our children with high standards of teaching and learning in challenging times.

**AFTERSCHOOL ACTIVITIES:** A letter regarding afterschool activities for term two will be sent home on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> January.

Please continue to drive and park safely around our school and local community at drop off and collection times. Please also contact the school if you have any concerns or queries.

Thank you for your continued support and cooperation.

Take care and all the best

Tomás McKee

Mr Tomás McKee

(Principal)