**October Newsletter**

**Covid-19**

All staff and pupils have settled back and readjusted to a new normal here in St. Mary’s. Our systems that are in place are working really well while we face the ongoing challenge of keeping everyone safe and healthy .Please read the following useful information

**The steps that will be taken in the event of a suspected/confirmed case of Covid-19 in school**

The HSE has issued guidance for parents which addresses the following issues:

* Symptoms to look out for and when to contact your GP
* When to keep your child at home and phone your GP
* When it’s okay to send your child to school or childcare

You can access this guideline at the following link <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/protecting-your-child.html>

1. If your child becomes unwell at school and presents with symptoms associated with Covid-19, we will follow the procedure that is set out in the section ‘Dealing with a Suspected Case of Covid – 19’ in our school’s Covid – 19 Response Plan. This involves bringing your child to a designated area within the school. This area is called an “**Isolation Area**” and every school is required to have such an area identified to deal with a potential case of Covid – 19. We will contact you and ask you to collect your child as soon as possible. Please note that the school is not required to inform anyone that your child has been removed due to his/her symptoms. This procedure is purely precautionary. If you have other children in the school, they do not have to be removed from the school at this point. You are required to contact your GP to discuss concerns and we would ask that you keep the school updated on the advice given by your GP. The next steps will depend on the advice given to you by your GP.
2. If your child is referred for a test, all other members of the household that attend the school should remain at home.
3. If your child is confirmed positive for Covid – 19, the HSE will begin the process of contract tracing. This will most likely mean that the school will be contacted to assess the Public Health Risk.

**From this point onwards, the process will be led by the Public Health HSE.**

* **The school cannot take any action in relation to exclusion, part closure or full closure; unless the Public Health HSE determine that the action is required.**
* **If any action of this nature is required, the HSE will liaise with the school to provide clear guidance to the school community.**
* **If the school has not been contacted by the Public health HSE in relation to a confirmed case in the school community, then contact with the school has not been deemed necessary.**

It is a distressing time for families who are dealing with a suspected or confirmed case and all the pupils and their families are entitled to confidentially.

The school cannot and will not make the name of the pupil with a suspected or confirmed case known to the public. Unfortunately, we have no control over exchanges on social media, where information based on hearsay is shared.

We will continue to implement the measures set out in the school’s Covid-19 Response Plan to provide a safe learning environment for our pupils and a safe and healthy workplace for all our staff.

Thanking you for your continued support.

**Good News Noticeboard**

Have you some good news to tell us? If your child has some GOOD NEWS to tell us, we would be delighted to place it on the wall near the main entrance. Perhaps your child has won a race, entered a competition or joined a new club. We would be delighted to share in your good news. Please encourage your child to share their news with the school community.

 **School Uniform**

Please ensure that your child is in their full school uniform. We do realise that, for various reasons from time to time, it is not possible to wear the school uniform. However, we ask everybody to simply try their best to be in full school uniform.

**Vetting**

All Vetting Application forms have been distributed to new parents at this stage. If you wish to help out in the school in any way it is essential that Vetting Applications are completed. If you have lost the form and require an additional form, please email us and we will send out a further form**.**

 **Homework**

 Homework will return for all classes commencing on Monday 5th October. Junior Infants to 1st class-Mrs Whiteford will be giving reading and some writing activities each night. Please check homework folders daily.

2nd to 6th class pupils will receive English/Irish Reading, English/ Irish spellings, tables and Work It Out Maths activities each night. For some classes, we will also be giving some additional activities which we will be setting on a Monday and asking for the work to be submitted on Friday. We will also be utilising the learning platform Seesaw with the children and we would hope to familiarise the children with this platform over the next few weeks in school so as to allow them to become familiar with using the platform. Below is a link should you wish to inform yourself.

https://web.seesaw.me/parents

**Wellbeing Wednesdays**

 Thank you for all of your wonderful submissions for Wellbeing Wednesday. Our next Wellbeing Wednesday will take place on Wednesday 21st October.

**Parents ‘Association**

The Parent’s Association would first like to welcome all the new pupils and their families to the school and also welcome everyone else back after the extremely long break.
The PA reformed in January 2020 with Kirsten Bayley-Parker as chair, Laura Clarke as treasurer, and Wioleta Kudyba as secretary. We would love to welcome any other parents who would like to get involved!

While Covid-19 has changed how the school and PA can run events, we are working together to ensure that the children can have lots of fun and celebrate upcoming festivals.
The PA has been asked by the school to fundraise for new IT equipment for each classroom, supplementing the IT grant.

To kick off this fundraising, we are going to have these upcoming school events.
Halloween dress up - Friday 23rd October €2 per child
Christmas Jumper day - date to be confirmed €2 per child.
*We also plan to organise a zoom call in October for all the parents. We will send details closer to the time.*

**Parent /Teacher Consultations**

Please see attached note related to Parent Teacher Consultations.

**School Activities**

On Monday 5th October, 5th and 6th classes will participate in a Zoom Author visit from Megan Wynne, organised by our local library. We look forward to this event.

 Maths Week will take place from 12th to the 16th October. The children will be focusing on maths related activities throughout this week.

**Hallowe’en Midterm**

Please note that the school will be closed from Monday 26th October to Friday 30th October (inclusive).



**Parent Teacher Consultations**

Parent teacher Consultations will take place during the final two weeks before the midterm break. In light of the current situation we are happy to facilitate this by telephone or face to face. Please complete the attached form to indicate your preference.

 Telephone calls will take place after school hours at a time which we will email you prior to the day of the call.

If your preference is a face to face meeting, we must ensure that all social distancing rules are adhered to. Masks must be worn and a Contact Tracing Log must be completed prior to the commencement of the meeting. The date and time of your meeting(s) will be emailed to you in the near future with the Contact Tracing Log, which you must bring with you to the meeting.

Parent Teacher consultations are 10 minutes in length.

 Please detach the form below and return to your child’s class teacher or email your completed form to the school @ stmarys2.ns@gmail.com by the end of this week.

 Thanking you for your cooperation.

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**Parent Teacher Consultations**

Please tick your preference below:

**Option A**

My preference is to receive a telephone call for my Parent/ Teacher Consultation.

**Option B**

My preference is to have a face to face meeting with my child’s (ren’s) class teacher.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_