



ST. JOSEPH'S PRIMARY SCHOOL



" A school at the heart of the community,
community at the heart of the school "

30 August 2023

Dear Parents/Guardians

Welcome back to the new academic year 2023-2024. May I extend a very warm welcome to our new Primary 1 pupils and their families. Welcome also to new pupils Aodhan (P3), Joey (P6) and Pavel (P7).

To all our other pupils in Primary 2-7, it is good to see you back; I trust you had an enjoyable summer.

We also welcome Miss Grainne McClean to P6/7 and wish her every happiness in her time here in St Joseph's.

Please take some time to read over the following information.

Staff

Our dedicated and caring staff are looking forward to working with your children throughout this academic year.

Teachers use their directed time in the mornings to prepare for the day ahead or to consult with colleagues on school matters. If you need to see your child's teacher for anything more than the delivery of a brief message, please arrange an appointment through the office.

These routines are not designed to make staff inaccessible to parents, they are to facilitate the best use of teacher time and the optimum level of interaction with your children for the benefit of their education.

We appreciate your support in this.

Address: 31 Downpatrick Road Strangford Downpatrick Co. Down BT30 7LZ.

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Tel/Fax: 028 44881615

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Breakfast Club

This club will operate daily Monday-Friday from 8:00am-8:40am. Thereafter, children will return to their classroom to be supervised by their teacher. The club costs £1 per day and must be paid for in cash on a Monday morning for the days your child will be attending that week. The money is used to purchase the food fresh, as and when it is needed. Children should not be dropped off before 8am as there will be **no** supervision. Last breakfast will be served at 8.20am sharp.

Morning Routine

For those children not attending Breakfast Club, school doors will open at 8.40am. All children should be in school by 8:50am sharp ready to begin the school day.

Primary 1-7	Start at 8.50am
Primary 1-3	Finish at 2.00pm
Primary 4-7	Finish at 3.00pm

NB - School will continue to finish at 2pm every Friday for all our pupils

Important: if you give consent for your child to walk home from school unsupervised (P4-P7), please note that staff have been advised by EA that they are not insured or trained to escort children safely across the road.

Dinner Money/Swimming Money/After School Club payment etc

School meals cost £2.60. Please find enclosed the menu for September 2023 to mid-February 2024. Dinners must be booked and paid for on the School Money App before midnight the night before. All clubs and trip payments must also be paid for through this App as we now operate a completely cashless system (with the exception only of Breakfast Club payments).

Panto Trip

We have secured tickets for all our P1-P7 pupils to attend the pantomime 'Snow White' in The Grand Opera House on Thursday 11 January 2024. Further details to follow. Full payment of £15 should be paid via the School Money App by Wednesday 6 September. Many thanks.

Healthy break/lunch

We are now entering our 21st year as a Healthy Eating School!

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Snacks should consist of either fruit and/or vegetables and a drink of milk or water. Crackers or a selection of healthy bread snacks are also acceptable. We would ask all parents for their continued co-operation with our Healthy Break. If your child has health problems and is unable to comply with our Healthy Eating policy, please contact the school to discuss.

Packed lunches should be a 'Healthy Lunch Box' as in previous years. No sweets, chocolate or crisps should be included in your child's lunch.

Bottles for water

Children are encouraged to bring their own filled water bottle daily. Fizzy drinks or energy drinks are not permitted. Bottles can be refilled throughout the day from our Rocwell water dispenser.

Nut Allergy

Please be very careful not to send any products **containing nuts/seeds into the school environment** as we have several pupils with this potentially life-threatening allergy. This also includes some cereal bars and seeded breads, which have nut traces. All we ask is that you are vigilant as we must be very conscious of any medical needs in our school. **Children are not permitted to swap items from their lunch boxes for the same reason.**

Outdoor Learning

We will continue to make use of our Outdoor Classroom by drawing up a timetable for each class. This learning space will take children outside the confines of the classroom walls, where they will be surrounded by nature. Research shows that learning outdoors boosts confidence, increases children's well-being, social skills, communication, motivation and overall academic performance.

We will also continue to make full use of our Forest School in The Avenue for our 'Forest Friday' sessions. See timetable attached for your information.

After School Enrichment Programme

Clubs commence week beginning Monday 4 September - see attached timetable for details. Please pick your child up promptly after the club finishes; all children should be off the school premises by 4.00pm on these days.

Clubs for P1 will begin week commencing 11 September when children will remain in school for the full day.

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If someone else is picking your child up from school or they are going home with another pupil, please inform the class teacher via SeeSaw or notify our school secretary, Mrs Coates. This is to ensure our safeguarding procedures are being followed for the safety of all our pupils

Swimming

Swimming for P4 and P5 pupils begins on Wednesday 6 September at a cost of £3 per child, per session, which includes transport and should be paid through the School Money App.

SWIMMING TIMETABLE 2023-2024	
September 2023-December 2023	Primary 4 & Primary 5
January 2024-March 2024	Primary 6 & Primary 7
April 2024-June 2024	Primary 3 & Primary 7

Primary 7 will attend swimming lessons for two consecutive terms before moving on to post primary school.

PE

All classes will have Tuesdays and Thursdays as their PE days.

All children from P1 to P7 must wear full school uniform every day, except for their allocated PE days of Tuesdays and Thursdays. Black school shoes must be worn daily. On PE days, children will wear **plain navy bottoms** and trainers. Children may bring their trainers to change into for our after school sports clubs.

PTFA

The **Parents, Teachers & Friends Association (PTFA)** work tirelessly to provide social interaction and to raise funds for our school. This is a small welcoming group, which meets regularly. New members are very welcome to join the association; if you are interested, please inform our secretary who will give you further information. If you do not wish to commit at this stage, you may offer your support by helping with this year's scheduled events.

If everyone does a little, nobody is left to do a lot!

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Funds are also raised through the Clothing Bank. Please note that we have been advised by OSM that **pillows and duvets will not** be accepted.

Mobile Phones

Please note that mobile phones should **not** be used by parents or children in the school building or playground. This gives rise to concerns over Child Protection. Thank you for your co-operation.

Names on Uniforms

It is lovely to see everyone looking so well in their school uniform on the first day of the new term. Tailored shorts and summer dresses may be worn up to the end of September only. Visitors always comment on how well our pupils look and we thank you for ensuring that this is the case. Please mark **all** items of uniform with your child's name, even shoes!

Consent Forms

Please find enclosed a detailed Consent Form (P1-P7) which is a legal requirement and is updated annually. Our ICT Code of Practice Agreement for P3-P7 pupils is also attached for signature and return. **Please complete and return both these forms to your child's teacher by Friday 8 September 2023.**

School Policies

Copies of our Pastoral Care, Intimate Care and Child Protection Policies are included for our P1 families - copies are available in the front hall for anyone else who would like to take a copy home. All other relevant policies can be found on our school website www.stjosephsstrangford.org.

I look forward to linking with you all throughout the year for the benefit of all our pupils. I am confident that 2023 - 2024 will be another very productive and successful year here in St Joseph's!

Kindest regards

Laura Fitzsimons

Mrs Laura Fitzsimons
Principal

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