

St. Teresa's Primary School



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Dear Parents,

10th September 2020

A big welcome back to everyone following the extended closure of our school due to COVID-19 and the summer holidays. A special welcome to all our new pupils entering Reception Class, Primary One and Primary Two classes this year. I hope that we will all continue to work together to ensure that all the children feel safe, secure and happy in school. Last year, was probably the most difficult year that many of us have ever experienced. As we begin this school year we realise that it will be another year with many challenges, due to the unprecedented times we are living in, but if we co-operate, work in partnership and strive to do the best we can, I hope that we will be successful in providing our pupils with stimulating educational experiences.

I would like to congratulate our pupils on how well they have adapted to the new school routines and I would also like to thank parents for your support and co-operation in helping us implement these new COVID-19 procedures to ensure a safe return for our whole school community. In line with our safety-first approach, if your child is unwell, we would advise that you keep them off school until they feel better. I realise that this will present challenges to families, but I feel it is in the best interests of the whole school community if we can reduce transmissions of illnesses in the school. It is vitally important that if your child or a member of your household displays any symptoms of Coronavirus that they do not come to school and you follow PHA advice and arrange a COVID-19 test if this is required. Please keep the school informed by a telephone call on the first day of absence and regularly thereafter. If a child arrives in school and is ill, parents will need to be contacted to take their child home.

As all our children are now in school, I must comment that it is great to have everyone back and I know that the sentiment is shared by all our children, parents, staff and governors. I must give credit to the excellent work that has been completed with the children over the past six months at home as all our teachers have commented on the good standard of work the children are completing in class. I would like to thank those parents who have donated Hand Sanitizers and Soap Dispensers, we are very grateful to have received these as our regular handwashing routines are quickly depleting our soap and hand-towel supplies. We would very much appreciate any further donations of soap and kitchen rolls from parents during this first Term.

A list of our school holidays and closures for 2020-2021 are included in this Newsletter as well as some of our new procedures and routines for this school year.

Payments to School Secretary-In order to maximise the safety of everyone in our school community and to limit footfall and a potential spread of the virus, we request that all money which needs to be paid for School dinners/Afterschool should be placed in an envelope each Monday morning and sent in to School with your child. Please put details of money enclosed on the outside of envelope.

Home School Links-In order to maintain our good home-school links, should any parent wish to speak to a member of staff, we encourage you to contact our School Secretary Nicola who will arrange for your child's teacher to contact you. Nicola is in the office every morning from 8.30am to 9.30am. I would like to remind parents to visit our school website www.stteresaspstullyherron.com to keep up to date with news items, relevant documents and events. We also encourage parents to download the school app (details can be found on the website) so you can receive updates throughout the year. This year we are inviting Local Businesses to sponsor our school website to help with our school funding and to purchase some new ICT resources. The Local Business will donate £50 and we will include your Business Name on the ticker tape at the top of our School Website Homepage for one year. We will provide you with a letter of receipt which you can include for your accounts.

School Dinners-In order to ensure our Class Bubbles are as secure as possible pupils in classes Primary 3 to Primary 7 are now taking their school dinners in the classrooms along with the pupils taking lunch. The pupils in Reception, Primary 1 and 2 are continuing to take their dinners in the Dining Room.

Information regarding applications for free school meals and uniform grants can be found via the following link: <https://www.eani.org.uk/financial-help/free-school-meals>

It is very important that you register your child(ren) for free school meals even if they take lunch as our school receives additional funding from the Department of Education for children who are eligible for free school meals.

School Uniforms-All our pupils are looking extremely smart in their new school uniforms. To assist parents with washing their child's uniform we request that pupils wear their school PE tracksuit on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and their full-School uniform on Tuesday and Thursday. This will help to ensure there is time for clothes to be cleaned between wearing. All children must wear plain black footwear (shoes or runners) with their Full- School uniform, girls should wear bottle green socks or tights and children are permitted to wear their own coloured runners with their P.E. uniform. A school coat should be brought into school.

Please label your child's uniform-sweatshirts, jumpers or cardigans.

***Note a change to Lunch Boxes/Bags-**Children who take lunch are now permitted to bring their lunch in a lunch box/bag which is labelled and which can be cleaned every day, children no longer need to use disposable bags. Children may continue to bring in their reuseable water bottles which should be clearly labelled. (As we promote Healthy Living only water must be contained in the water bottle.) Children may also bring fruit in for Break-Time, fruits such as, Grapes and Strawberries should be cut into small pieces. Staff will not be permitted to handle any of the children's items so please make sure your child is able to manage any food or drink items sent in.

As we have a pupil who suffers from a specific food allergy we request that that our pupils do not to take any food containing Nuts or a Nut product for snacks or lunch into school.

Homework Routines-At present our Class Teachers are not setting any written Homework Tasks for their pupils. However, we would very much encourage all our pupils to read every evening and to revise Literacy and Maths Facts especially High Frequency Words, Times-Tables/Number Bonds etc. We are planning to begin Reading Homework Activities before the end of September, a large amount of new reading books have been purchased for each class, other written activities will be increased gradually over the course of this Term. This will help to assist our pupils back into the school routine. Pupils in classes Primary 2 to Primary 7 are currently completing some reading, spelling, New Wave English and Maths Homework Activities each morning. As with previous years we will be utilising some online learning forums such as Mathletics and Accelerated Reading for pupils to complete as part of their homework routines. We also hope to introduce a new online learning app "SEE-Saw" for all classes this year. Plastic folders will be used to transport any learning materials to and from school, as these can be wiped down daily, this will reduce the chances of carrying any infections into school or back home.

Reception/Primary 1/Primary 2 Afterschool Club

This Afterschool Club has always been very popular with both parents and pupils as it enables one pick-up at 2.35pm or the Primary 1 and 2 pupils can travel home on the school bus. It is also a good social opportunity for pupils to engage and play with their class peers and develop friendships. This Club commenced on **Monday 7th September 2020** for Reception, Primary 1 and Primary 2 pupils from 1.35pm to 2.35pm. For Primary 1 and Primary 2 pupils it will cost **£2.50** per day, **£12.50** for the week. For Reception pupils it will cost **£3.00** per day, **£15.00** weekly, as they will remain in school from 1.00pm to 2.35pm.

We do not receive any funding from the Department of Education to provide this service to parents. If you would like your child to attend this After-School please send the money in an envelope each Monday morning writing the days you would like your child to attend.

Drop off and Collection Routines-To ensure that large gatherings of people can be avoided and social distancing maintained, we have given careful consideration to the arrangements for drop-off and collection to and from school.

The School Bus will be arriving at the School in the morning at **8.20am**.

In order to give the children travelling on the bus adequate time to enter the school premises and to stagger arrival times we would like children travelling by car to arrive at school from 8.30am- 8.45am.

Punctuality will be key to ensure that this system is effective.

Primary 2-Primary 7 children must be left at the school gate where initially the children will be met by members of staff and guided to the appropriate entrance.

Reception –Primary 1 children may be escorted to the Foundation Classroom Entrance where they will be met by members of staff. An older sibling may also accompany their younger brother or sister to the classroom.

Adults entering school premises must wear a face mask.

The School Bus will be leaving School in the afternoon at **2.20pm**.

Children who travel by car should be collected between **2.25pm – 2.35pm**.

We would appreciate if you could ensure that your child(ren) is/are collected promptly at collection times and that they know how or with whom they are going home.

Please again adhere to social distancing guidelines at these Drop Off/Collection times.

I would appreciate that parents sign and return the permission slips sent home with this Newsletter.

I would like to thank you for your commitment and support in ensuring a safe return to school for our pupils and staff. We will continue to review the situation, be flexible with our approaches and learn as we go forward as we endeavour to deliver high standards in all that we do. This is new to us all but most importantly we strive to ensure everyone is safe and well and to a happy, healthy and enjoyable school year 2020-2021.

Yours Faithfully,

Sinead Mc Court

Below is list of the School Holidays and other dates for this School Year 2020-2021:

Teacher Training	Monday 5 th and Tuesday 6 th October 2020- <u>School Closed</u>
Flu Vaccination	Friday 16 th October, All Parent Consent Forms need to be returned by Thursday 15 th October 2020.
Halloween Fun Day	Friday 23 rd October – Pupils wear their Halloween Costumes and each class will have Halloween Fun Activities
Halloween Holidays	Monday 26 th October - Friday 30 th October 2020 (Inclusive)
Parent/Teacher Meetings	Monday 9 th November - <u>School Closed</u>
Christmas Holidays	Begin on Monday 21 st December @ 10.30 am – Friday 1 st January 2021 (Inclusive) School re-opens on Monday 4 th January 2021
Mid-Term Break	Monday 15 th February – Friday 19 th February 2021 (Inclusive) School re-opens on Monday 22 nd February 2021
St. Patrick's Celebrations	Wednesday 17 th March – Friday 19 th March 2021 (Inclusive) School re-opens on Monday 22 nd March 2021
Easter Holidays	Begin on Holy Thursday 1 st April @ 10.30 am – Friday 9 th April 2021 (Inclusive) School re-opens on Monday 12 th April 2021
1 st May Bank Holiday	Monday 3 rd and Tuesday 4 th May 2021

Staff Training	Thursday 27 th May 2021
2 nd May Bank Holiday	Friday 28 th May, Monday 31 st May and Tuesday 1 st June 2021
Summer Holidays	Tuesday 30 th June 2020 @ 10.30 am