



**Week beginning Monday 8th January 2024
Newsletter**

www.stmaryspsportaferry.com

WEEK BEGINNING 8th JANUARY 2024

We hope and trust that you and your families had an enjoyable Christmas time and that your child is looking forward to settling back into the school routine.

As always, we will try to keep you informed about our school through the school website and our weekly newsletter.

We value your input and if there is anything you think you can do or offer to enhance the school, please do not hesitate to contact me. We are looking particularly for volunteers to help enhance our outdoor environment, sport/music/specialist coaches or tutors, or perhaps you can give an hour to help pupils with their reading.

Should you wish to get involved or know of others who may be interested, do not hesitate to let us know.

This week will see the re-introduction of our very successful Breakfast Club and After Schools programme. More details on this are available in this newsletter.

PHA ADVICE ON RESPIRATORY ILLNESS

Before the Christmas Holidays we seen a huge increase in Flu and other respiratory illnesses. This is quite common during this particular time of the year and is likely to continue to increase in coming weeks.

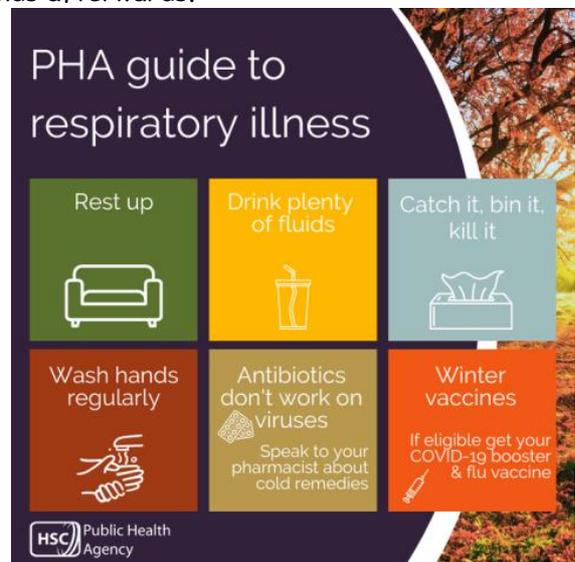
With this in mind the Public Health Agency (PHA) is offering some simple advice to get us through winter and reminding everyone that hand hygiene and self-care are essential when preventing and managing winter illnesses.

The PHA is urging all people eligible for the free flu and COVID-19 vaccines, who have not yet been vaccinated, to get it now and is particularly calling on the parents of pre-school and school-aged children to get them vaccinated against flu.

Evidence shows that the flu vaccine for children can provide direct protection to them and will also reduce the amount of flu circulating, thus providing indirect protection for older people and individuals with underlying health conditions.

Following some simple steps can help protect children, minimise the spread of illness in education and childcare settings and protect wider communities. If your child is unwell and has a fever, they should stay home from school or nursery until they feel better and the fever has resolved.

Good hand and respiratory hygiene is also key, so practice regular handwashing with soap and warm water. Catching coughs and sneezes in tissues then binning them is another simple way to help stop illness from spreading and make sure to wash your hands afterwards."



DO I NEED TO KEEP MY CHILD OFF SCHOOL?

We have had a number of phone calls and enquiries about pupil's sickness and whether a child should be attending school with a suspected illness. The chart below has been issued by PHA regarding some common illnesses that pupils may experience, particularly at this time of the year.





AFTER SCHOOL CLUB

Clubs begin on Monday 8th January 2024 and will run through until Thursday 8th February 2024. Clubs can also be paid for weekly at £2.50 per session attended.

You can register your child by sending in an overall or weekly payment in an envelope with your child's name clearly stated at the front and which days you wish your child to attend.

JUDO AFTER SCHOOL

Peegy will be back in the school from Thursday 18th January 2024 to deliver After Schools Judo. You need to go to <https://www.teamo.chat/club/register/psj> to register your attendance.

IRISH DANCING AFTER SCHOOL

Deirdre is still attending the school every Wednesday afternoon between 2.00pm - 3.00pm for any P1/2/3 pupil who may be interested in learning Irish Dancing. Cost is £2.50 per session.

BREAKFAST CLUB

Remember, you don't necessarily need to pre-book. Just turn up from 8.00am and a warm welcome and satisfying breakfast awaits. The cost is £2 per person attending.



MATHLETICS

Well done to all our P3-P7 children, their teachers, assistants and families who continue to use Mathletics in school and at home to help develop Numeracy and Maths skills. We are so pleased to announce that as a school, the children have achieved 156 Bronze Mathletics certificates, 42 Silver Mathletics certificates and 10 Gold Mathletics certificates to date. Leo, Jack, Aidan and Cliodhna in P4 as well as Conall in P3 were the first students to achieve their Gold certificates this year! The school also achieved 383,900 Curriculum Points and 27,641 Live Mathletics Points. For the first time ever, 'Out of School/Homework Hours on Mathletics' has exceeded 'In School Hours on Mathletics' which is testimony to the wonderful uptake in so many homes.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

This week we send birthday greetings to Jack (P4), Tyler (P3), Enda (P7) and Eilidh (P6).



SCHOOL DINNERS

Dinners cost £2.60 per day and must be paid at the beginning of each week in a clearly marked envelope with your child's name and days on which they wish to have school dinner

Monday	Classic Margherita Pizza, Steamed Broccoli/ Coleslaw; Chipped Potato/ Baked Potato/ Salad; Banana, Yogurt Pot.
Tuesday	Homemade Savoury Mince Pie, Fish Goujon in soft shell taco with tomato salsa, Baton Carrots/Salad, Mashed/Baby Potatoes/ Salad; Mandarin Orange Sponge & Custard
Wednesday	Chicken Curry & Naan Bread; Green Peas & Sweetcorn; Rice /Oven Baked Potato Wedges; Strawberry Jelly, Ice Cream & Fruit
Thursday	Roast of the Day Gammon, Stuffing & Rich Gravy; Carrot & Parsnip/ Savoy Cabbage; Mashed Potato/ Oven Roast Potato; Chocolate Sponge & Custard.



Friday	Hot Dog with Tomato Ketchup, Garden Peas/ Spaghetti Hoops/ Salad, Chipped Potatoes/ Baked Potatoes; Flake meal Biscuit & Fruit Selection
BREAK	
Tuesday	Toast 30p
Wednesday	Toast 30p or buttered bagel 50p
Thursday	Toast 30p
Friday	Toast 30p or homemade buttered scone 50p
Also available daily! Apple/ Orange juice 40p; Milkshake 40p; water 50p; Selection of fresh fruit 25p	

LABEL YOU ITEMS OF CLOTHING

As we begin a new school term I remind all to please make sure that all items of your child's clothing, in particular school jumpers, are labelled with your child's name clearly on display.



CONTACTING THE SCHOOL/ ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

If your child is absent from school, or you need to contact the school, for whatever reason, please contact the school, either by telephone on 028427 28278 or by e-mail at info@stmarysps.portaferry.ni.sch.uk If there is no-one in the office to take your call, please leave a message on the answering machine stating the nature of your call or that your child will not be in school that particular day. When your child returns to school please give a written confirmation for their reason of absence. This is also needed, even if you have contacted the school already.



IMPORTANT DATES FOR THE DIARY

Tuesday 10th January

P7 Swimming

SACRAMENTAL DATES FOR 2024

The following dates have been agreed for the sacraments for next year:

First Confession:

Celebration of Sacrament - Friday 15th March 2024
10.30am in St Patrick's

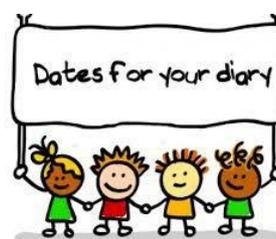
First Communion:

Celebration of Sacrament - Saturday 11th May 2024
at 10.00am

Confirmation:

Service of Light - Sunday 10th March 2024 at
11.00am in St Patrick's

Celebration of Sacrament - Friday 19th April 2024
at 12.00noon in St Patrick's



CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING

If you have any concerns regarding the safety of your child please contact Mrs Breen (Designated Teacher for Safeguarding and Child Protection) or Mr Denvir (Deputy Designated Teacher for Safeguarding and Child Protection).

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

Each week we will be introducing a different whole schooling community "Thought for the Week." Should you wish to, this is an opportunity to reflect on the words and relate to how they might influence or impact upon us.

**EVERY MORNING
YOU HAVE TWO CHOICES:
CONTINUE TO SLEEP
WITH YOUR DREAMS OR
WAKE UP AND
CHASE YOUR DREAMS.
THE CHOICE IS YOURS.**

- Anonymous



