



Week beginning Monday 22nd June 2020

Weekly Newsletter

www.stmaryspsportaferry.com

UPDATE ON A RETURN TO SCHOOL

The Department of Education, on Friday, published the long awaited "Re-opening Schools Guidance - New School Day." We as a school are currently studying and analysing the details of this guidance carefully to consider the implications for our own school setting. There are many considerations we need to factor in before school reopens. I will be writing out to you all, before school ends on 30th June, with a more comprehensive update.

QUESTIONNAIRE

As part of our on-going school improvement, this week, we will be inviting you to complete an online questionnaire on our school web site. The focus will be on Home Learning and Health and Well Being. Your views and opinions will help provide us with an invaluable insight into your experiences over the last few weeks/ months and assist us in planning for addressing teaching and learning when we bring our pupils back to school in September. A link will be sent out to all later this week via the school messaging service. .

RETURN OF SCHOOL TEXT BOOKS

Many of you will have school text-books and reading books at home. The school will be open on Tuesday 23rd June from 9-12pm for families to return these books to school. We need all books returned to help us plan for what is available in September. Please come along to the back car park and enter the school via the side door of the school hall.

SCHOOL UNIFORM (Repeat)

As you will be aware we agreed to change our school uniform and school badge for September 2020. This is still the intention, however, it is not compulsory for this incoming year as pupils can still wear their green coloured jumpers, should they still fit. There will be no new green jumpers for sale. New maroon coloured school jumpers will be on sale in August 2020 from the school, further confirmation details on when, where and how to make these purchases will be sent out closer to the time. We hope to keep the price similar to previous years. Trousers will again be grey with a white polo shirt and black shoes.

A uniform grant is available, to those who are eligible but the information on the EA web-site is not updated. Once I have confirmation on eligibility for the 2020/21 school year I will send out the link.

END OF SCHOOL YEAR

It is hard to believe that we have now come to the last full week in June and this will be the last Parent Newsletter of this "unique" year. So much has gone on since we were all last together, physically, back in March.

Who would have believed that when we came back to school after the mid-term break in February that by Easter school would be closed, pupils will all be at home doing their learning from the confines of their bedroom/ kitchens/ living rooms and not classrooms teachers would be putting

work online and all learning would be done remotely, society as we knew it would be locked down and we would all be confined to our homes?

When you think back about all that has occurred over this period it is hard to comprehend and believe. We have all had to adjust and our experiences over this period have all been different - sometimes positives, sometimes negatives, some happy time and some sad but we have hopefully come through it and there are positive shoots beginning to arise as places begin to open up and life, as we know it, is getting back to some form of normality - if this is possible! We cannot be too complacent but it is indeed a much better place.

As a school we have had to adjust very quickly and we want to place on record our thanks and appreciation to everyone for sticking with us and supporting us during these times. Home learning has not been easy and when our pupils return to school in September we will do all we can to help, support and ensure that all of our pupils are at the level they need to be.

The last few weeks have been very busy with "Make, Bake, Grow and Learn," "Health and Well-Being," "Space Week" and then "Virtual Sports Week" and we really appreciate the time and efforts many of you took in participating in these activities. I know so many took great comfort and really appreciated the almost daily updates. Alongside the maintaining of pupils learning it was our intention to try to keep our schooling community engaged in fun and engaging activities and keep us all connected. Hopefully you all felt involved and you all still feel part of our great St Mary's schooling community.

We cannot move on without making a special mention to our Primary 7 pupils and their families. For some families this represents a final attachment to our Primary School after so many years and we are particularly thinking of those families at this time. It almost seems that our P7 pupils are slipping away from us unnoticed. Normally, this incoming week the P7 pupils would be going around the school getting their T-shirts signed, a special Leavers Assembly would be organised, Leavers Mass to attend and some form of party in school to look forward to. It is always an exciting and equally sad time for all. This year it is all slightly different, however, we are adamant that we will not let them leave us without some sort of acknowledgement. I encourage all of our P7 pupils to read over Miss Green's notes for this week where there might be a special invitation for you all! Also if you have not done so, thus far, can you please ensure you return all the associated end of year questionnaires and information to Mrs Green as soon as possible. We do not want any pupil to miss out on what we are attempting to put together.

Thank you once again to all for making the community of St Mary's so special and we look forward to welcoming you all back to our school in September 2020.

Enjoy your summer holidays and as ever keep safe and well and we will see you all again soon.

Mr Gilchrist

