



**ST. MARK'S JUNIOR SCHOOL.
PARENTS NEWSLETTER -
JANUARY 2015**

Dear Parents / Guardians,

A warm welcome back to school and a very Happy New Year to you all!

There are a number of issues that we wish to put on your radar!

NEW STAFF

Over the past few months we appealed decisions made by the Dept. Of Education and Skills which cut our staff allocation.

Our appeals were successful!

So we welcome **Debbie Murray and Emily Hannon** as Special Needs Assistants, **Marie Twohig and Eamonn Shivnan** as Resource Teachers. and **Eilish Murray, Anne O' Hanlon and Claire Hogan** as substitute teachers covering maternity leaves.

APPLICATIONS FOR JUNIOR INFANTS SEPT 2015

We have well over 150 applications for places in Junior Infants for September 2015. We are currently assessing eligibility in terms of Catchment area, Date of Birth etc.

As per our Enrollment Policy, and because of pressure on places, age will be a determining factor again this year.

Currently only children who are 4 by the 30th of April 2015 will be eligible for a place this coming September.

If you think your child is eligible for a place and you have not given us your child's details or made an application for a place **please do so without delay - today.**

Incoming J. Infants Sept 2015....

General Intake Meeting & Open night Wed Feb 4th 2015

If you have registered your child for a place you will be getting a letter shortly inviting you to our

general Meeting and open night for parents with children starting J. Infants in September 2015. This meeting will take place on **Wednesday 4th February 2015 from 7.30pm - 8.30pm**
All parents of incoming J. Infants are required to attend as you will receive your formal application form and pack at this meeting.

ATTENDANCE / TIME KEEPING

Congratulations to all those children who won a Champion Attender award for not missing a single school day last term.

Keep it up!

By far the majority of you are excellent at sending your child to school every day, coming and collecting on time and giving a written note for any absences when they occur. Well done on this.

However, there is a minority of children who are kept at home regularly for no apparent reason, who are brought to school and collected late daily and for whom no written explanation is offered when absences occur.

Can I remind you of the following please:

1. All absences must be accounted for on your child's return by **written** explanation / note. (Every parent was given set of slips at beginning of the year to make this easier)
2. If your child misses 20 school days a report goes to the **Educational Welfare Board** and you may face prosecution.
3. If your child is sick for more than one day, a call to the school is advisable and very helpful.
- 4 Late arrival means your child is missing out on valuable time and starts the day trying to catch up. Our system now keeps track of late comers in terms of minutes and converts this to hours and days missed

5 Late collection causes upset for your child.

6. The best way to start the school day, for your child, is to have your child in their line at 8.50 a.m. every morning.

MONEY MATTERS

To all those parents who have paid for books and for the cost of **extra curricular activities** we are most grateful. Thank You.

Could we ask that all outstanding money owed to the school for **Books, Swimming, Dance, Basketball** and other activities be paid in full by the end of this week.

If you are having a problem doing so please make an appointment to meet me - today.

BOOK MONEY 2015/2016:

As you know we have a policy of keeping books and workbooks to a minimum. We place as many books as possible on our Rental book scheme.

In order to make payment easier for you - **we have devised 3 payment options** together with a payment schedule. You will be receiving a detailed letter on this...

This year at your request, we are again including the cost of activities in the bill. We have done everything to keep costs down and have built in a discount to you if all money is paid prior to June 26th.

The costs are as follows.....

J.Infants **prior to 26th June** €120

J.Infants **after 26th June** €130

S. Infants **prior to 26th June** €120

S. Infants **after 26th June** €130

1st class **prior to 26th June** €120

1st class **after 26th June** €130

2nd class **prior to 26th June** €140

2nd class **after 26th June** €150

These prices include all books, educational equipment, copies, pencils Art & Craft materials, photocopying etc AND the cost of Dance and

Basketball for Junior, Senior and 1st classes and include the cost of Swimming for 2nd classes **Starting on Tuesday 3rd February, we will start to take payments on books for next September. You may do this from 8.50am - 9.10 am every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.**

If we are to purchase books and educational equipment, in time for 1st September, for you child - **all monies must be paid by 26th June 2015.**

I would encourage you to make weekly payments in whatever amount you can afford - so as to ease things for yourself in September.

DRUMS

All 1st and 2nd classes will receive 5 sessions of Drumming this term.

This will be done at no cost to you the parents.

SCHOOL UNIFORM AND JACKET

Your child is expected to wear full uniform every day and the school track suit on designated P.E. days.

All children are required to wear the school jacket. Many parents have made it easy for their child to identify their jacket by putting a particular key ring on the hook of the zip which is an excellent idea.

For many reasons this makes life easier for all and I would ask for your full co-operation with this please.

2ND HAND UNIFORMS

We are always grateful for 2nd hand uniforms donated in good condition.

At the moment we are short of track suit bottoms.

If you would like to avail of 2nd hand items of uniform - at any time- just talk to your child's teacher or the Principal and we will organise it for you.

LOST PROPERTY

Week on week there are a number of items - mostly clothing misplaced by the children.

These items end up in our lost property box.

You can check in this box any afternoon at home time. **Items will be left in the box for a month and after that will go for reuse or recycling.**

PAIRED READING

We rely on you totally for the running of this wonderful initiative.

A huge thank you to the small group of parents / grandparents who make themselves available to help on a consistent basis.

If you think you could give us a little time daily or even weekly please contact the school. We would love to have your help.

COMING UP THIS TERM

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

Sun 25th Jan - Sat 31st January 2015

As a Catholic School we annually mark this week with some specific activities each day.

Each Day will involve an activity in school but there is one Special day....

Grandparents Day Wednesday 28th Jan. 2015....

This starts with Tea & Coffee in the Hall at **10am** followed by time in the grandchildren's class for all the grandparents - and finishes up at **11 am** before children go to first yard.

We look forward to seeing as many Grandparents as possible again this year.

A detailed letter on this will issue to your child so please inform your child's grandparents in good time.. as it has proved to be a huge source of enjoyment for all Grandparents with 180 turning up to last year's day!

FRIENDSHIP WEEK

February 16th, 17th & 18th

We will be running **Friendship Week** again this year and we will be coupling it with **Anti bullying** lessons and **Restorative Practice Circles**

We will also be selling Friendship bracelets in the school shop to support **Amnesty International's** work for Children in countries where children's human rights are under serious threat.

Friendship Week also helps us foster and embed empathy - a key component in reducing the possibility of bullying.

FIRST CONFESSION

This takes place for 2nd Class on **Thursday 5th March 2015 @ 7 p.m. in St. Mark's Church**

In order for your child to be allowed take part in the Sacrament of First Penance we must have received your child's Baptism Certificate (First Holy Communion will take place on Sunday Sunday April 19th and will be spread over 2 masses on that day.)

INTERCULTURAL WEEK

18th, 19th & 20th March 2015

The objective of this week is to acknowledge the intercultural dimension in St. Mark's Junior School.

We are tying it in with **St. Patrick's Day and Seachtain na Gaeilge** so that our Irishness is celebrated alongside all of our other cultures.

BUNNY BOP

This is the Parents Associations next big fund raiser and will take place the day we close for Easter Holidays, **Friday 27th March**

You will get more details nearer the time.

But this year as last year the children will be asked to dress up in National Costume or *G.A.A.* County Jersey / Irish Jersey / Irish colours etc, as a means of celebrating our diversity

While the Bunny Bop is going on we are hoping again to organise our annual coffee morning with an International Flavour - and so we will be inviting you to bring in something sweet to share which would be typical of your culture. We have done this for the last few years and it has proved to be a wonderful success thanks to your efforts and baking!

SPRING CLEAN UP

We will be concentrating on getting our Sensory Garden, Community Garden & Woodlands back into tip top order so that the children can take full advantage of them when the weather gets better. We will let you know when we have a date fixed for this and would really appreciate a big turn out.

NEXT TERM....

SCHOOL TOURS

These will take place in **May** (dates to be decided) and costs will be **roughly** as follows

J. Infants Teddy Bears Picnic and Bosco	- €5
S. Infants - The Farm	- €20
1st Class - The Zoo	- €20
2nd class Lullymore Park & Bog	- €20

ACTIVE WEEK

This will take place, weather permitting from **8th - 12th June 2015.**

**Sports Day Thurs. will be 11th June 2015
weather permitting**

SCHOOL WEBSITE

We are trying to ensure that all notices are posted on the school website - and are trying to move more and more towards being a paper free school - so please check out our website regularly on www.stmarksjs.ie

SCHOOL CLOSURES THIS TERM:

February Midterm:

•Closed Thursday 19th and Friday 20th
February 2015

St. Patrick's Weekend:

•Closed Monday 16th March & Tuesday 17th
March for St. Patrick's day

Easter Holidays:

•We will close for **Easter Holidays on Friday
March 27th March 2015 at 12 o'clock** (following our Bunny Bop)

•We will reopen on **Monday April 13th 2015**

As ever, we thank you for your generosity, courtesy, co-operation and support.

We look forward to working with you this term as partners in doing the very best we can for your child's education and all round development.

Yours sincerely,



ANN RYAN,
PRINCIPAL.