



## PARENTS NEWSLETTER.

12th SEPTEMBER 2014.

Dear Parents / Guardians,

### 🌟 WELCOME

We would like to extend a really warm welcome back to school to all our students and an especially big welcome to all those coming to St. Mark's Junior School for the first time. We hope everyone will have a happy and fulfilling year - full of laughter and learning.

### 🌟 TEACHERS

Three of our teachers are on Career Break this year - **Suzannah Mc Dermott, Mark Fennelly and Jane Doyle.**

### 🌟 YOUR CHILD'S NEW TEACHER

You should by now have received a list showing who your child had last year and the teacher he /she will be having this year. You will have a chance to meet your child's teacher at the Class Meeting in early October.

### 🌟 BOOK MONEY, RENTAL & EQUIPMENT

In order to make things easier for you, the school purchases everything your child will need for the school year. This includes: books, workbooks, copies, pencils, crayons, and all educational equipment.

**This year, as you know, the cost is also inclusive of all extra curricular activities.**

You pay us and we buy and provide everything your child requires for the coming year.

Through our **Book Rental and Educational costs Scheme** your child has access and use of books, educational equipment, computers, art materials and much more for a fraction of the cost to you of providing these items on an individual basis.

**We started collecting Book Money last March! All book money was due at the end of June.**

Each year a huge amount of time and energy goes into chasing non payment of books.

We sincerely thank those of you who have already paid in full.

**We would ask those of you who have not done so to please send in the money immediately.**

**We cannot give your child books until YOU have paid for them.**

If you are having difficulties paying - please come and talk to me.

**Payment can be made every morning in the lobby from 8.55 - 9.15 a.m.**

## EXTRA CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES

**Music and Dance** class with Rachel will start again on this **Friday 19th September** beginning with 8 sessions for S.Infants.

**Basketball** - Sadly we have had to say Goodbye to Barry who was our wonderful Basketball coach for the past 3 years. But we welcome Séan our new coach and Basket ball will resume on **Friday 19th September** beginning with 8 sessions for **1st classes**.

All J. Infants , S. Infants and 1st classes will do 8 weeks of Dance and Basketball on a rotational basis. But J. Infants will not start these activities until after Christmas!

**Swimming lessons** will start for two and a half of our 2nd classes on this Friday 19th September. **Swimming is an obligatory part of the curriculum in just the same way as Maths or English. Therefore there is no opt out clause.**

When 8 sessions are completed the other half of 2nd class will start. Details on this will issue to those involved for the first rotation..

**Swimming, Basketball and Dance are provided at a cost to the school.**

**We do our best to keep costs to a minimum. To those who have paid - thank you.**

**If you have not done so we would really appreciate immediate payment for these activities..**

**Hurling coaching** will take place with our 2nd classes throughout on a rotational basis on Fridays. There is no charge to you and we thank our Local GAA for this.

**Tin Whistle** will be taught in 2nd class. We encourage all 2nd class children to take up the opportunity to learn this instrument. Tuition is free!

**Tin Whistles will be on sale in the school shop for about €5.00.**

## BOARD OF MANAGEMENT LETTER:

Each year there are a number of issues which are worth restating for the education, safety and development of your child. With this in mind **we would ask that you carefully read the letter you received when school reopened.**

## PERSONAL INSURANCE:

You will also have received an optional **"School Personal Accident Insurance"** form. We would encourage you to read this carefully. Should you wish to avail of this insurance we will accept **completed forms and money in an envelope until the 30th September or you can pay in person between 8.55 - 9.10 a.m. each morning in Main Lobby.**

## SCHOOL ENROLLMENT POLICY.

### **PLEASE NOTE:**

Date of birth for school enrollment for September 2015 will be 4 years by **30th April of year starting i.e.. In order to start school in September 2015 - your child must be 4 years old by April 30th 2015.**

**Depending on pressure on places this date may move into May.**

## SCHOOL UNIFORM

We are proud of the school Uniform.

We remind you that all children are expected to wear full uniform at all times.

**Tracksuits and runners should only be worn on PE days and always - for the whole school - on Fridays.**

**The School Jacket is part of the uniform and all children are expected to wear it to school. A key ring of your choosing on the zipper makes identification simple.**

**Please ensure that your child's name is on all their belongings.**

We always have a good supply of **2nd hand uniforms and these can be obtained free.** Just come and talk to us and we will organise it for your child.

## STAY INFORMED

Our school Website is [www.stmarksjs.ie](http://www.stmarksjs.ie)

**Please take a few minutes to check it out.**

**From now on we will be placing all Notices and Newsletters on the web page and gradually will be working at becoming PAPER FREE.**

**IF YOU DO NOT HAVE INTERNET PLEASE LET YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER KNOW.**

## LIFT OFF TO LITERACY

**This initiative will start again with the new S. Infant classes. It will continue with Our 1st classes also.** Lift Off involves intense teaching of Literacy by 4 teachers in each of the Senior Infant classes (and 3 teachers in 1st classes) for a power hour Monday to Thursday.

Some of last year's S. Infant pupils read up to 75 books and made huge strides with their reading.

The cost of books for this was huge - but well worth the expenditure and effort.

**The most crucial part of this initiative is the return of every child's book EVERY morning.**

## SENIOR INFANT PARENT MEETING

**If you are S. Infant parent you will be invited to attend a briefing meeting on this programme - date yet to be decided.**

2nd classes will do **Guided Reading** in order to build on the wonderful progress they made in S. Infants and 1st class.

## PAIRED READING

If you think you can spare **an hour once a week to help us with our Paired reading programme** we would love to hear from you.

You do not have to be an Einstein to participate! We are always short of parents.

So please give your number to us at the office if you are interested.

**A huge Thank You to the Parents / Grandparents who gave consistently of their time last year.**

## SCHOOL GARDEN.

Our **Sensory garden**, our **School Community garden** and the **Woodland Walk** always need **tending/ tidying**. If you have a bit of free time and would like to help us maintain these please contact the school office. We would be very grateful.

## ATTENDANCE / PUNCTUALITY

**Please make a real effort to have your child in school for lining up time at 8.50 a.m. each morning.** A good start to the day makes all the difference.

We would also ask that you send your child to school everyday and keep absences to a minimum.

**We would remind you that 20 absences in a school year will trigger an automatic report to the Educational Welfare Board.**

**If your child is absent a written explanation is required from you.**

You will receive Absent Explanation slips to make the required written explanation as quick and easy as possible.

As much as possible try and avoid taking your child out of school early.

## LUNCHES

We are hoping to receive funding again this year for the nutritious and balanced lunches which are supplied by Carambola.

We would urge you all to avail of them. It will save you money, time and hassle.

Your child will tend to eat what s/he sees other children eating!

Your child will bring home all waste from the his/her lunch. In this way you will see what is been eaten and also it reduces the volume of our waste.

## WATER ONLY

We have made a decision to move to WATER ONLY as the drink for the children in the Carambola lunch menu. Each child will receive a reusable bottle which should be filled with WATER ONLY by you. Our own water has been tested and approved so children can then help themselves to refill as they need.

In this way we improve our healthy outcomes and also cut back on the amount of waste in terms of plastic bottles that we are dumping into the environment.

If the reusable water bottle gets lost there will be a charge of € for a replacement. More info will issue on this before end of September as we hope to be up and running for October

## CALENDAR:

You have received a calendar of all school closings for the year 14/15

## STAFF MEETINGS:

**This year Staff meetings will generally take place outside of school hours.**

## YELLOW FLAG AWARD

As you may be aware **Restorative Practice** is the corner stone of how we deal with Conflict of any kind in the school. Each morning starts with a Restorative circle in each class. Children are nurtured in the development of empathy. Both the Senior school and the Junior School are having our efforts in this regard acknowledged at a ceremony on 14th October when we will be awarded the Yellow Flag to signify that we are a Restorative school.

## ACTIVE FLAG

This year we are going to focus on getting our whole school community moving! We are going to focus on healthy minds and healthy bodies and hope to get more movement injected into the school day - both inside and outside. We will be hoping to get everyone involved and you will be hearing more on this very soon.

## MORNING LINES

We really need your help and co-operation on this issue. There are 560 pupils in the yard and if each has a parent with them in the morning - then we are into crowd control.

Once your child's teacher arrives to yard you are perfectly free to leave - in fact it really helps us if you do so!

Many parents do leave but there are a number of parents who 'linger' and then walk with their child - even though their child does not need them to do so. This makes bringing in the lines a slow and tortured process - with some children getting cut off from the vision of their teacher because adults are walking in front of them. We need to avoid this happening.

So please note the following:

- You may leave yard once the teachers arrive to yard at 8.50am
- If your child is ready and able to walk in without you - please stand back and let him/her do so.
- Once lines start to move you will be asked not to move.
- If you wish to stay on yard please stand at the back of the lines and allow all lines leave yard before moving.
- Please stay away from the window as knocking on them and or peeping - while lovely! - is guaranteed to unsettle some of the children.

## **SAFETY FRIRT - PROCEDURES FOR ENTERING & EXITING SCHOOL**

• For safety reasons - Pedestrians are strictly prohibited from using the Staff Carpark Gate. This is for cars only.

• In the interests of safety children are **not allowed exit from school via the Fortunestown Lane gate.**

• Children should exit via the Fernwood gate or main entrance only and make their way home along the safer routes from there.

• We ask you to strictly avoid using Fernwood entrance with cars - this is a pedestrian only entrance/exit. Cars constitute a serious hazard here and Gardai will be policing this area.

• The Church car park is the safest place to park, for every one's sake. Please observe the flow of traffic and use correct entry and exit.

## THIS TERM:

**You can look forward to:**

Meeting for Parents & Guardians of children making First Confession & Holy Communion - <b>Date to be decided</b>
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Open Night, Whole Class Parent Teacher Meetings & Association AGM - <b>Date to be decided</b>
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Class Meetings /Lift Off <b>information Meeting</b> - meet the teachers and hear about this years curriculum for your child-
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Arts Week - Monday October 20th - 24th 2014
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Meeting for Parents & Guardians of children making First Confession & Holy Communion - <b>Date to be decided</b>
Witches Walk - Friday <b>October 25th 2014</b>
Junior Infants Photo, date to be decided. Also Class Photo with School Calender.
<b>Parents/Teacher Meetings, will take place over two Thursdays in November - Thursday 20th &amp; 27th 2.45 - 5.15pm</b>
1st Class Christmas Pageant, <b>probable</b> date Tuesday 16th <b>December.</b>
<b>Christmas Holidays - School Closes at 12 midday on Friday 19th Dec and reopens on Monday 5th Jan. 2015</b>

**Some dates are provisional. But if they do need to be changed we will try to give you as much notice as possible**

#### **UP TO DATE CONTACT:**

Please ensure that we have an up to date phone number where you can be contacted at all times during the school day. Without this contact an emergency can become a crisis. It is also crucial so that you can be texted on our **Text a Parent scheme.**

**If in doubt check with Rita or Imelda in the office 4512076 and ensure we have correct details.**

#### **CONSTANT NEEDS**

We are always in need of **paper** - if you work in a printer or have access to off cuts etc we would be hugely grateful to you for them.

From time to time we also need items for **junk art** such as **clean fabric or old buttons** - again we would be hugely grateful to you for such things.

**2nd Hand uniforms** and tracksuits are in constant demand and we are always grateful for them when they are clean and in good condition.

Finally the entire Staff of St. Mark's Junior School look forward to working with you in your child's interest.

We hope that this year proves to be a wonderful, happy and positive experience for us all.

As ever we rely on, and thank you, for your wonderful co-operation, generosity and support.

Beir Bua 's beannacht,




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ANN RYAN,  
PRINCIPAL.