



St Mary's Primary School

Grace Park Road, Athlone, Co. Westmeath
Tel: 090 6472321 • Email: stmarysathlone@gmail.com

November

November 2024 Newsletter

Dear Parents/Guardians,

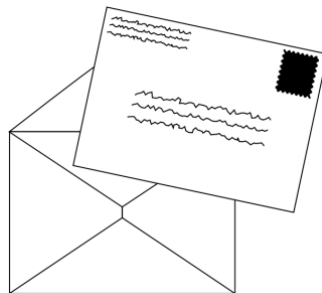
Here are the various ways you can contact the school if you need to do so: -Phone: 09064 72321 -Email: stmarysathlone@gmail.com

-In Person: At the main office

If you need to contact your child's teacher this can be done via the SeeSaw app. If you have not received a login code for this or you cannot access it please let your child's teacher know.

Our School Website -www.stmarysprimaryschoolathlone.ie has further information and updates.

Transition to Secondary School



All 6th Class pupils must have their acceptance forms returned to the secondary schools by this Friday 29th of November 2024.

Parent Teacher Meetings



Parent Teacher Meetings - many meetings took place last week Wednesday 20th and Thursday 21st of November. Some meetings continue this week. Thank you for your cooperation in using the Calendly app. We hope this new booking system made it easier for parents to arrange a convenient time to meet with teachers.

Odd Socks Day



Tuesday 12th November was our annual 'Odd Socks Day'. Both pupils and staff wore their odd socks to promote anti-bullying, showing children that everyone is unique.

Athlone GAA Club School Donations

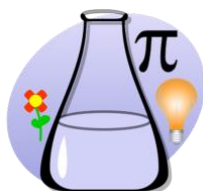


St Mary's welcomed a very special guest recently - Benny The Blue! Benny is the club mascot for Athlone GAA, who have generously donated two sets of goalposts, dozens of footballs and other training equipment to St Mary's NS. It is the nearest sports club to St Mary's and Athlone GAA would welcome new members, boys and girls from ages 4 and up. Many thanks to club chairperson Fiachra McLoughlin for arranging

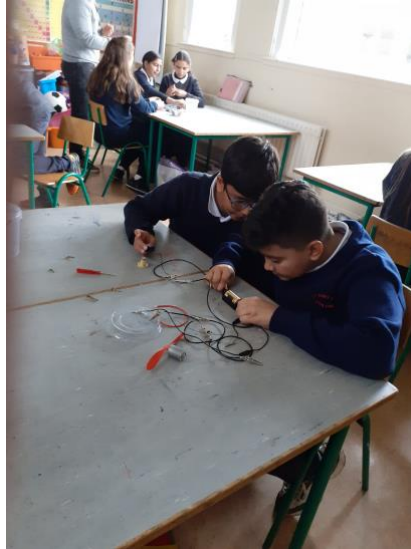
the donation - we are hoping for a long and successful partnership between the club and our school!



Science Week 2024



St. Mary's Science Week 2024/25 took place from the 11th to 15th of November. This year the theme of Science Week Ireland was 'Regeneration' ; it's about using what we've learned in the past to create a brighter future! So lots of our activities concentrated on smart ways of using materials and energy. Teachers prepared an experiment or activity with their class and then taught this same experiment or activity to the other children in their class grouping on rotation. This allowed each class to experience and participate in 3-4 experiments, each maybe lasting approx. 45 mins-1 hour during the course of Science Week. Pupils really enjoyed the hands on learning involved and the abundance of STEM activities provided!



Parent Association



A huge, huge thank you is due to all parents, guardians and families who supported the Parents' Association Sponsored Walk collection before Halloween break! The PA raised €4,300 which is an amazing amount. The pupils will reap the rewards of this collection as some of the money raised will go toward the purchase of graded English reading books and new chairs for events. It will also go towards funding the Communion Party for 2nd Class pupils, the Graduation Party for 6th Class pupils and the purchase of resources to enhance the learning and enjoyment for the pupils in our school.

Any parent/guardian is welcome to attend these meetings - if you have any ideas regarding initiatives or resources to enhance the learning and enjoyment for the pupils in our school please come to the next meeting and let us know!

The next meeting takes place on 12th February 2025 @ 7pm.

If you wish to contact the Parent Association please email stmaryspa2022@gmail.com

Student Council

Our Student Council Elections took place in October and we now have our 2024/2025 Student Council up and running! It consists of 10 members from 3rd-6th class. Four of these members are from 6th class, two from 5th class, two from 4th class, and 2 from 3rd class. Each class level has substitute members, who will help out with the council when needed or step in for a council member in the event of their absence.



Junior Mayor

Ishan Sachin was elected Junior Mayor for 2024/2025. Ishan wrote an excellent speech that won the votes of his fellow 6th class. Ishan will be working with the Student Council this year to ensure that he leaves St. Mary's an even better school than it already is!



Enrolment



Enrolment for Junior Infants 2025/26 will officially open on December 1st 2024. If you have a child who wishes to enrol for the 2025/2026 school year, enrolment forms are available from the school office or on the school website. Please submit enrolment forms as early as possible to ensure your child is offered a place.

Parent Classes



The Longford/Westmeath Education and Training Board (LWETB) provides English language classes for adult learners- ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) .These are levelled classes, suitable for all.

Please contact Iseult Murphy (086 8354567) for more information.

- Christmas Flower Arranging- Candle Table-Top Arrangement- Thursday 5th of December 1- 2pm
- Zumba Dancing - Thursday 9th/16th/23rd/30th of January 2025 @12.30-1.30pm in St Mary's Hall (Eircode N37 WO89)
- Cookery Classes Ongoing at 9.30am on Mondays here in the school.

All courses are free of charge to parents/guardians of pupils in the school. Please ensure the school has an up to date email address for you, as all communication regarding courses will be via email. Please contact Iseult (Home School Community

Liaison) on 086 83545647 or on iseulthscl@gmail.com to enrol in a class or for further information/advice.

Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) Service in St Mary's N.S



Our HSCL Coordinator -Iseult Murphy- is a teacher who works in partnership with parents, teachers and local community organisations to support positive educational outcomes for pupils/students.

The HSCL Coordinator also works closely with the other two strands of Tulsa Educational Support Services, Educational Welfare Officers (EWO) and personnel from the School Completion Programme (SCP) to improve educational outcomes for children. As part of her work, the HSCL Coordinator will meet parents during home visits, at courses for parents in the school and at other school and community events. Please feel free to contact Nessa McLoughlin on 086 8354567 or at iseulthscl@gmail.com for advice, information or support.

Attendance

We encourage full attendance at school for all of our pupils each day that they are well. Please see our step by step protocol below for communicating with parents regarding absences:

Step 1 -5 day text

You will receive an automatic text from the school when your child misses 5 days- *regardless of the reason why or whether or not you have informed the school of the absences.* This text is intended to alert you that your child has reached 5 days absence.

Step 2- 15 Day Letter

Your child's teacher will send home/post out a letter to inform you when your child has missed 15 days of school- *regardless of the reason why or whether or not you have informed the school of the absences.*

Step 3- 20 Day Letter

This is a formal letter which reminds parents of their legal obligation to ensure their child is attending school under the Educational Welfare Act 2000.

To encourage attendance we have an Attendance Drive. Please see below for more information.

School Lunches



Just a reminder that St. Mary's N.S. is a NUT-FREE SCHOOL.

Please do not give your child nuts or nut spreads e.g. peanut butter or Nutella for lunch. This is to protect some pupils who have allergies. Our school's healthy eating policy can be viewed on the website at the following link:

<https://stmarysprimaryschoolathlone.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Healthy-Eating-Policy-Scanned-Signed-May-2022.pdf>

Birthdays



There are a number of children with a variety of allergies in our school. In the interest of child safety, we ask that parents/guardians refrain from sending in treats for the whole class as a birthday celebration. We also request that parents

distribute birthday party invitations themselves, either before or after the school day.

Parking



Parents/Guardians are reminded of the importance of responsible parking when dropping/collecting children at the school. The set-down area is for quick drop-offs and pick-ups; please do not congest this area. There is a 10 minute grace period for parents to park in the Fair Green Car Park at drop-off and pick-up times; we encourage parents to avail of this. For health and safety reasons, cars should not be blocking bus spaces, double-yellow lines, be parked blocking footpaths or at school entrances. Please carefully obey the pedestrian crossing between the two school buildings as this is very busy in the mornings and afternoons. At 2pm and 3pm collection times, please only cross the road with your children at the *designated pedestrian crossing*.

Activities



- GAA coaching continues every Thursday for 2nd Class
 - 5th Class have rugby training
- Cumann na mBunscol- our school team trains once a week at lunchtime and so far they have played two boys' matches and one girls' match to date .
 - 6th Class have Athletics each week
 - 3rd Class continues swimming this month.
- Dance with Trisha has commenced for Junior Infants/1st Class /3rd Class every Thursday
- Hilary Roche - Music Generation is running for 4th Classes.

Junior Infant PEEP

(Parents Enhancing Education through Play) Programme

Karen Kinneavy (School Completion Programme) and Iseult Murphy (HSCL) are continuing to run the PEEP programme with Junior Infant classes. The PEEP programme involves one parent/grandparent accompanying their child to each session. Each Junior class gets access to 3 sessions. Ms. Phillips' class completed their sessions in the first part of November. Please see the schedule for the remainder of the term:

- Junior Infants C (Ms. Martin):
-Wednesday 27th November -Wednesday 4th Dec and
Wednesday 11th of December.

School Visits



- Members of our Student Council represented the school at the BÍ Cineáltas Anti-Bullying Initiative in Dublin on Wednesday 25th of September.
- Various classes continue to attend Athlone Library for storytelling sessions each week.

School Choir



- Monday and Tuesday 16th & 17th of December- School Choir Carol Singing at Golden Island 12pm-2pm
- Peace Proms Choir Workshop in Dublin on Wednesday 11th of December 2024

Christmas Play Performances 2024



Please see the schedule below for the Christmas Plays 2024;

Tuesday 10th December

5th Class

Aladdin Trouble

11:30 am

Senior Hall

Wednesday 11th December

Peace Proms Choir Workshop in Dublin

Thursday 12th December

2nd class

11:00am

Senior Hall

4th class

1.30pm

Senior Hall

Friday 13th December

Senior Infants

9:45am

Junior Hall

1st Class

Christmas Cheer

11.30am

Junior Hall

Monday 16th December

Carol Singing

Golden Island 12pm-2pm

School Choir 5th/6th

Tuesday 17th December

Carol Singing

Golden Island 12pm - 2pm

School Choir 5th/6th

3rd class

Christmas around the world

10.00am

Senior Hall

Wednesday 18th December

Junior Infants

9.45am

Junior Hall

Thursday 19th December

6th Class

A Snow White Christmas

10:15am

Senior Hall

Upcoming Closures

School closes for the General Election 2024 voting on Friday 29th of November and reopens on Monday 2nd of December.

School closes for the Christmas holidays on Friday December 20th @ 12:00pm and reopens on Monday 6th of January @ 9.20am.

Kind regards,

Ailish McManus

Ailish Mc Manus

Principal