St. Mary's Primary School

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Hello and Welcome to Our First School Newsletter of 2026!

Welcome Back

We are delighted to see our pupils, staff and families return to St. Mary's PS for another busy and rewarding year of learning and enjoyment. Throughout the year, we will continue to share updates on school events, pupil achievements and the many wonderful activities taking place across our school community.

A special welcome to all our new pupils and families. It has been wonderful to see how quickly everyone has settled into school life and become part of the St. Mary's family.



We are also pleased to welcome two new members of staff this year, Ms Cunningham and Ms Morrin, who have joined our Special Education team. We wish them every success and happiness in their new roles.

Congratulations to Ms Kate Conroy on the arrival of her baby son over the summer. We send our very best wishes to her and her family.

Finally, a huge thank you to our Parents' Association for their work in organising the Halloween Costume Hub and Witches and Wizards Fundraising Walk. We would also like to thank all the pupils and parents for their fantastic support of these events.

We look forward to another happy, safe and successful year together and thank you for your continued support of our school.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh go léir.

Niall Spain

Dates For your Diary!

- **Witches Walk** – October 23rd
- **Parent Teacher Meetings** – November 18th & 19th
- **Communion** – April 24th at 1.30pm
- **Confirmation** – April 17th at 1.30pm
- **School closures:** OIDE training days – Wednesday April 7th and Thursday May 13th
- **Christmas Holidays** – Tuesday December 22nd at 12pm

Junior Infants

We would like to welcome our new Junior Infants to St. Mary's PS. We are delighted at how well the children have settled. Ms. Carty and Ms. Colgan are very proud of all the hard work the children have put in since the beginning of the school year. Well done boys and girls!



Parents' Association

A big thank you to all our Parents' Association committee members for their continued time, energy and dedication to our school community. We are delighted that Ms Edel O'Malley, who joined the committee last year and took on the role of Chairperson, continues in this role for the year ahead.

Last year saw lots of fantastic work and exciting initiatives, and we look forward to building on these successes and continuing our work to support the school, our pupils and the wider school community throughout the coming year. Thank you to everyone who contributes to making our Parents' Association such a valuable part of school life!

Anti-bullying (Bí Cineálta)

Our Anti-bullying (Bí Cineálta) policy is available on our school website and all pupils are partaking in regular lessons promoting kindness and friendship. Please discuss this at home with your child.



School Garden

There has been lots of activity in our school garden this autumn! 6th Class have been busy weeding and tidying up the garden, getting it ready for the months ahead. 4th Class saved some tomato seeds, which we hope to plant in the spring. 3rd Class enjoyed harvesting our potatoes. Amanda kindly cooked them, and the children got to taste the potatoes they had grown themselves! We are looking forward to one more exciting harvest before Halloween, when we will harvest our pumpkins!

A big thank you to Amanda, Ms Kenny, all the children and staff for helping our school garden grow and thrive.



Music Generation

Our Music Generation tutors Danna and Lucy are back with us for another year! Danna visits Junior Infants to Second Class each week, to teach the children rhythm, pulse, percussion, song-singing and more. Our Third to Sixth class violin pupils have been enjoying getting into the swing of their lessons with Lucy each week.

Attendance

We recognise that consistent attendance is a vital element in education. Targeting good attendance is part of our school action plan and therefore attendance is an area of high priority for the school. Some important points to remember:

- Regular attendance supports better learning and achievement.
- Being present builds responsibility and good habits.
- Every school day counts — even a few absences can add up.
- Strong attendance helps create a positive school community.





Cross Country

30 athletes from 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th classes recently travelled to Tullamore to take part in the Offaly Schools Cross Country competition. Huge congratulations to all the pupils who took part and a special well done to Ayla and Liam who finished in the top 10 in their races and to our 4th class boys team who won a team medal! We are very proud of all of these pupils!



Boys Gaelic Football

Our boys football team have qualified for the Cumann na mBunscol Final - their fourth final in a row! The team enjoyed a brilliant campaign, winning all of their group games to secure their place in the decider. They will now face Gaelscoil Eiscir Riada in O'Connor Park with plenty of excitement building ahead of another big day for the school. The team have been trained this year by Mr. Kelliher and Mr. McNevin.

Girls Gaelic football

Girls from 4th to 6th class have been taking part in the girls GAA Autumn Cumann na mBunscol competition. They played four games in their group, winning one, drawing one and and losing two, with some great performances along the way. Well done to the girls and to their coaches Ms Brannock and Ms Farrelly.

Shoebox Appeal

As usual, we will be collecting shoeboxes for the Team Hope Christmas Shoebox Appeal after midterm. We look forward to receiving lots of shoeboxes from the community!

Army Band

The highlight of the term so far has been the visit of the Army Band to our school. We were treated to lots of songs…from the Irish Rover to Indiana Jones and from Ireland's Call to Pink Pony Club. The conductor also introduced the children to all the different instruments in the orchestra. A huge thank you to Ms Carty and Captain Brian Clarke for organising the visit for us.

Inter School Quiz



A huge well done to our 5th and 6th class students who represented our school so brilliantly at the **St. Mary's Secondary School Inter-School Quiz**!

Rían, Ellie, Noah, Melissa, Maggie, Milly, Zoey, and Andrea from 6th class showed fantastic teamwork and great enthusiasm throughout the night.

Also, a big well done to our four fantastic 5th class students, Nia, Kostiantyn, Teighán and Lottie who stepped up to the mark and represented us so brilliantly!

Congratulations to all participants—you did us proud!

School Policies

Many of our school policies are available on our school website https://stmaryspsedenderry.ie/. Policies such as our Bí Cinealta (Anti Bullying), Code of Behaviour and the Chid Safeguarding Statement are available on the website along with our School Self Evaluation (SEE) report.



Peace Proms

We are very fortunate to have been chosen once again to perform at Peace Proms 2026. The children in Sixth class have begun to practise this year's songs, and will perform in the choir with the Cross Border Orchestra of Ireland in the RDS on 6th February 2027 at 2pm.



Halloween

Our Parents Association organised a very successful Halloween Costume Hub where families could donate old costumes and purchase new costumes for a nominal fee! We will see lots of these costumes on Friday at our annual Witches and Wizards walk! This walk is a fundraiser for the Parents Association so please return the sponsorship cards before the midterm break.

Réaltaí Beaga

St Mary's would like to give a huge welcome to this year's Réaltaí Beaga cohort. The children in Mr Carey's and Ms Kelliher's classes have been busy settling into school life over the last six weeks. Both classes have engaged in lots of outdoor play, sensory play and classroom activities. Lots of new friendships are being made and pupils are enjoying meaningful interactions with their peers. We hope the pupils are enjoying their experiences so far and we look forward to challenging them in new and exciting ways.



Fighting Words

Anne from Offaly Fighting Words is completing writing workshops with the pupils in 6th class at the moment. It is part of a collaborative project with all the 6th classes in Edenderry to write a joint story!