

St. Mary's Primary School



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Hello and Welcome to Our First School Newsletter of 2025!

We're thrilled to kick off a new year of learning, laughter, and lots of exciting moments at St. Mary's PS. Each term, we'll be sharing updates on school events, pupil achievements, and all the wonderful things happening in our classrooms and beyond. A warm welcome to all our new pupils and families! It's been lovely to see how quickly everyone is settling in and getting to know their new school.

A warm welcome also to our new staff members joining us this year, Mr McNevin and Ms Guinan who are both teaching in 5th class. Finally, a heartfelt congratulations to Ms Elaine Conroy on the birth of her son recently.

We're looking forward to a happy, safe, and fun-filled year ahead for all and thanks for being part of our school community.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh go léir.
Niall Spain

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. Egerton 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!



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.



Parents' Association

We're delighted to welcome our newest members to the Parents' Association—thank you for getting involved and supporting our school community. A big thank you as well to all our continuing PA committee members for your time, energy and dedication.

We're especially pleased to announce that Ms Edel O'Malley has taken on the role of Chairperson. We look forward to working together for another great year ahead!

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.



Cross Country

31 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, Liam, Joe and Daniela who all finished in the top 10 in their races. 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 third 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 Pullough in O'Connor Park after midterm, with plenty of excitement building ahead of another big day for the school. The team have been trained this year by Mr. Kelliher, Mr. O'Connor, 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've played four games in their group, winning two and losing two, with some great performances along the way. They are now in a shield final on Tuesday November 4th against Killeigh. 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. The children have already started bringing in their boxes!



School Garden

Our school garden has been full of activity this season! The pumpkin, gourd and potato harvests were a big success. A special mention goes to 4th Class, who rolled up their sleeves to dig up a fantastic crop of potatoes they planted earlier in the year. After all their hard work, the class enjoyed cooking and tasting their very own home-grown spuds.

Third class were busy sowing wallflower seeds, which will bring lots of colour to the garden in the spring. Meanwhile, the fifth class pupils carefully saved tomato seeds for planting next year.

It has been wonderful to see so many classes involved and learning about where our food comes from. The garden is truly growing — thanks to everyone's hard work especially Amanda and Ms Kenny.



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.

Boiler Upgrade Nearing Completion

We're pleased to share that work on our new boiler is almost finished! This upgrade will make a big difference in keeping our school warm and comfortable through the colder months.

A huge thank you to all our parents, pupils and staff for your patience and understanding throughout the works. Your support has been greatly appreciated.



Peace Proms



We are very fortunate to have been chosen once again to perform at Peace Proms 2026. The children in Third 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 February 7th 2026.



Active Schools Flag

We have entered the second year of the process to obtain our Active Flag. This week the children are having fun with a Maths Eyes Active Walkway which has been put up around the yard for Maths Week. We are also delighted to announce that we won a set of skipping ropes for our school. There will be lots more events happening throughout the year; keep your eyes peeled!

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 Carty's class 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 will be completing writing workshops with pupils from 5th and 6th classes during the coming weeks.

Inter School Quiz

Three teams from our school participated in the quiz night hosted by St Mary's Secondary School on 2nd October. Students from 5th and 6th class took part and represented their school well. A big well done to Fiadh, Meehaul, Joe and Dylan who came 3rd in the quiz. A great night was had by all!

School Musical

We are thrilled to announce our upcoming school musical, *Ebenezer Scrooge*, a heartwarming adaptation of Charles Dickens' beloved classic *A Christmas Carol*. The performance will take place on Monday and Tuesday night December 15th & 16th, as our talented students bring this timeless story to life with music, laughter and the true spirit of the season. Mark your calendars and come celebrate with us!

School Self Evaluation

Wellbeing is the focus of our School Self Evaluation (SSE). There is a full report available on our school website <https://stmaryspsedenderry.ie/> We are aiming to enhance pupil yard experience, increase pupil voice, and promote pupil and staff wellbeing.

Dates For your Diary!

- Witches Walk - October 25th
- Parent Teacher Meetings - November 19th & 20th
- Communion - April 25th at 11am
- Confirmation - April 18th at 11am
- School closures: December 5th (Child Protection Guidelines), March 4th and May 27th (Primary Curriculum Framework)
- Christmas Holidays - Friday December 19th at 12pm