

St James's Jotter

September 2015



As we begin a new school year, I would like to welcome all our returning children and their families and extend a very big welcome to all our new children in our Nursery Unit, Year One and throughout the school. I am sure you will all be very happy in our school.

I would like to thank all those who have wished me well as I take up the role of Principal of our school. I look forward to working in partnership with all our children, parents, staff, Governors and the local and wider community to develop our school for the benefit of the children.

Paula Cunningham

Shared Education Signature Project

I am delighted to announce that St James's and Whitehouse Primary Schools have been awarded funding to implement a three year Shared Education Project between the two schools. We have exciting plans for our children and parents/guardians over the next three years. Once we have finalised dates, I will be able to provide more information.

PATHS Programme

As you may be aware, last year we implemented the PATHS Programme in Years 4-7. This will be extended this year to include all classes. PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) is a programme funded by Barnardo's that aims to develop children's social and emotional learning. Children become more aware of their emotions and how to deal with them. Please talk to you child about what they have been doing in PATHS throughout the week.

Breakfast Club

Breakfast Club runs in the canteen from 8.00am until 8.50am Monday to Friday. The cost for a breakfast is £1.50 per child. The latest time a child can be left at Breakfast Club in order to receive a breakfast is 8.40am. Children can also be left at breakfast for supervision only (no breakfast). The cost for this is £1 per child. For families with three or more children, supervision costs £2 per day for the family. Please note this is only applicable if the children do not receive a breakfast.

£10000 for St James's!

At the end of the last school year we were awarded an Awards for All grant of £10000 from the Big Lottery Fund for our Project 'Rising Stars'. We have purchased additional iPads and will be running classes for parents/guardians in the very near future (further details will be provided as soon as possible). We would be grateful if you could support this venture and make it a great success.



School Uniform

As we continue to raise standards in our school, it is important that all children wear their full school uniform. Our uniform consists of a school jumper, white polo shirt, grey trousers for boys, grey skirt or pinafore for girls, grey or black socks for boys and white or grey socks for girls. All children should wear black shoes to school. When the children have PE they must wear their uniform to school and get changed for PE. They can change into shorts or track suit bottoms, t-shirt and trainers or plimsolls. PE gear including track suit bottoms and trainers should not be worn to school.

Please ensure that your child's name is on all items of clothing.

For health and safety reasons, children are not permitted to wear jewellery including earrings. Children may wear a small watch but this will have to be removed for PE.

Living and Learning Together

Leaving children to school

Children and parents should come into school in the morning through the children's entrance (the main front entrance can be used by those parents with buggies/ prams). The fire escape at the top of the green corridor should not be used. In order to promote children's independence, we ask that children in Years 3 to 7 are left at the door and make their own way to the classroom. As you are aware, it can get very congested particularly downstairs especially this year as we have an additional class. Teachers supervise the children from 8.50am and it can be very difficult for them to talk to parents at this time. If you need to inform the teacher of something, please send a note with your child or contact the office and a message can be given to the teacher. If you need to speak with the teacher, please phone the office to arrange an appointment.



Collecting children

Children in Years 1, 2 and 3 must be collected by someone (16 years and older) who is named on the permission sheet. We will not release a child to someone if they are not on the list. If the list of named 'collectors' changes, you must notify the class teacher in writing. On a rare occasion, if you need someone different to collect your child, please notify the school office as soon as possible. Year 1 children can be collected from the children's entrance foyer. The fire escape at the top of the green corridor should not be used. Year 2 children can be collected from the main door outside the office (facing the Nursery). Please note that teachers in Years 1 and 2 may not always be available to talk with you at 2.00pm as they may have to be with another class at 2.10pm. Year Three children can be collected from the children's entrance foyer - numbers of parents waiting here to collect their children will reduce after Hallowe'en when the Year 3 children stay until 3.00pm. Children in Years 4, 5, 6 and 7 are permitted to walk home if their teacher has the permission sheet. Children in these classes who do not have permission to walk home must be collected by a person named on the permission sheet. Class teachers will accompany their class to the doors at the children's entrance foyer from where the children can be collected or children can walk home. At 3.00pm there will be a teacher at the Bleach Green Gate and the front gate of the school to supervise children leaving. If, for any reason, a child is not collected by a 'named' person, the child will be brought to the office and the parents contacted.

Punctuality

Class begins for all children at 9.00am. This means children should be in the classroom ready to begin the day at 9.00am. If your child is late it is very disruptive to the class and the teacher when children arrive late and it can cause the child distress. All incidents of lateness will be recorded by the class teacher and monitored by the Senior Leadership Team.



Attendance

Daily attendance at school is vitally important for your child's development. Please see Every School Day Counts (on the next page) which illustrates various levels of attendance. If your child is absent, you must send a note to the class teacher providing a reason for the absence which is then recorded on your child's attendance record. If you do not provide a reason for the absence it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. Attendance is monitored regularly and if your child's attendance falls to 90% or lower, you will receive a letter from the school and your child's attendance will be discussed with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). If your child's attendance falls to 85% or lower a formal referral will be made to the EWO.

Car Parking

Please drive slowly and carefully in the school grounds. We would encourage you to park on the Fernagh Road and walk the short distance to school. Please ensure that you do not park on the zig zag lines at the school gates as these must be kept clear at all times. Please do not block the driveways of our neighbours. If this happens, residents have been advised to contact the PSNI. If you are parking in the school grounds, please note that you do so at your own risk and the school will not accept responsibility for any damage or loss of belongings. Please ensure that you do not park on the pedestrian footpath or block other cars.

Every School Day Counts

Every single day a child is absent from school equates to a day of lost learning. Attendance percentages can be misleading:

100% attendance	0 days missed	Excellent
95% attendance	9 days of absence 1 week 4 days of learning missed	Satisfactory
90% attendance	19 days of absence 3 weeks and 4 days of learning missed	Poor
85% attendance	28 days of absence 5 weeks and 3 days of learning missed	Very Poor
80% Attendance	38 days of absence 7 weeks and 3 days of learning missed	Unacceptable
75% Attendance	46 days of absence 9 weeks and 1 day of learning missed	Unacceptable

For some parents 90% may seem like an acceptable level of attendance, but the reality is that 90% attendance means that your child will miss half a school day each week or 19 days of school during year - that's nearly 4 school weeks.

Key Point - Give your child the best start in life - every school day counts.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

This year our Safeguarding Team is as follows:

Mrs Cunningham Principal

Mrs Dallat Designated Teacher for Child Protection

Mrs Kelly Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection

Mrs Heaney Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection (Nursery)

If you have any concerns about a child in the Primary School, please speak with Mrs Dallat or, in her absence, Mrs Kelly.

If you have any concerns about a child in the Nursery Unit, please speak with Mrs Heaney.

All concerns will be dealt with sensitively.

Living and Learning Together

Newtownabbey Food Bank

St James's Primary School and Nursery Unit is a registered referral agent for Newtownabbey Food Bank.

Vouchers are available in school. Mrs Dallat is the contact person for these vouchers. The voucher entitles an individual or family in crisis to receive food sufficient for three days.

There is no gathering of personal information by school.

The vouchers can be handed in at the local food bank at Abbots Cross Presbyterian Church or in Carnmoney.

At the food bank there are refreshments available and toys for young children to play with whilst waiting for the food pack.

Volunteers will also be present to direct individuals to social services/citizens advice if needed.

We Need You!

We always need volunteers throughout the school year. We are currently looking for volunteers to help us with the Accelerated Reader Programme and the school garden.

Helping with Accelerated Reader would involve supervising children in the ICT suite and/or the Library. If you would like to help us implement this extremely beneficial programme, please leave your name in the office.

The small garden area next to the playground is used daily by the pupils. To keep it looking well we rely on the pupils and volunteers to do weeding, digging and planting.

If you have a spare hour, once a week, during the next few weeks we would be extremely grateful for your support.

You do not need to be a garden expert, just a willing volunteer!

If you think you can help in the garden please contact Mrs Dallat or leave your name in the office.

Many thanks.

Free School Meals

If you think you may be entitled to Free School Meals, please ask for a form in the office and make an application. We can help you with the application form. Not only does Free School Meals help you as a parent/guardian but it also provides our school with additional funding in our budget. So please, take a few minutes to make an application.

Bikes and Scooters

In the interests of health and safety, any child who comes to school on a bike or scooter must get off it at the school gate and walk through the school grounds.

Guitar Lessons

Mark Rankin, our guitar teacher, will be starting lessons on Wednesday 16th September for children in Years 4, 5, 6 and 7. The lessons will take place between 1.30pm and 2.30pm and cost £4.50 per lesson (this should be paid to Mark). If your child is interested in attending, please inform the class teacher in writing by Wednesday 9 September.

No dogs allowed

In the interests of health and safety, dogs are not permitted in the school grounds.



Trip to Tesco

Mrs Cross's Year 2 class will be visiting Tesco in Newtownabbey on 17 September to participate in the Farm to Fork initiative. Many thanks go to Tesco and, in particular, their Community Champion Maria O'Prey, for all that they do to support our school.



EasyFundraising

I am appealing for all parents/guardians and friends of St James's to please register for Easy Fundraising. This is a very simple way for our school to make money. When you are buying anything online if you access the site you are buying from through EasyFundraising, the school will get a percentage of what you spend at no cost to you. It really is simple to do.

We have raised £195.34 since our Easy Fundraising account was opened approximately two years ago and we have 39 supporters. I would like to thank those who have signed up and have been able to raise these much needed funds for our school. The money raised is used to buy resources for the children.

Please log on to www.easyfundraising.org.uk, create an account and support the good cause St James's Primary School and Nursery Unit, Newtownabbey. It would be great if we could get 100 supporters by the end of September!

Website

Please remember to regularly check our website to see what is happening in our busy school!

www.stjamesps.co.uk

Living and Learning Together

ACCELERATED READER

This year the school will continue to use the Accelerated Reader system in Years 4-7. Accelerated Reader has proved very popular with both staff and children and has helped to promote an increase in the quantity and quality of the children's independent reading. We intend to build on this success by allocating 30 minutes per day, in class, to Accelerated Reader. An appropriate book level will be assigned to each child based on the results of his or her STAR Reading test (to be completed early in the new school year). At home the children are required to read for approximately 20 minutes every night (this is the minimum requirement). It is vitally important that your child is actively engaged in the reading process at this time. Time spent looking for books or reading with one eye on the TV will not help your child's reading development.

In order to help facilitate close monitoring of the children's progress it is important that Reading Records be completed and signed every night. An additional column has been included this year to allow you to see how well your child is scoring in the reading quizzes. A score of 85% or greater correct is recommended for optimal growth in reading achievement.

If you have any questions regarding Accelerated Reader please contact Mrs Kelly or your child's teacher.

Healthy Eating

In St James's we always try to promote healthy eating. Unfortunately this year we will not have our usual fruit scheme. However, we would encourage children to bring a healthy break to school and teachers will be awarding Class Dojo points for healthy breaks. We would also encourage parents/guardians to consider what they pack in their children's lunchboxes and to choose a healthier option for the best start to the school year. Choosing a healthier option at break and lunch can help with children's concentration and behaviour as well as helping children to establish good eating and drinking habits for future health. Please remember that we are a nut free school.

The Public Health Agency have provided the following helpful tips:

Drinks

What to pack—Water: tap water or unflavoured, still, bottled water.

Milk: all whole, semi-skimmed or skimmed unflavoured milk.

What not to pack—Fruit juices (including pure fruit juice), smoothies, sparkling water, squash or fizzy drinks, even those labelled 'no added sugar', 'diet' or 'zero'.

Fruit and veg

What to pack—Any fresh fruit and vegetables or fruit packed in pots or tins in fruit juice but not in syrup. A portion could be one medium sized piece of fruit, eg apple, orange, banana, pear, a cup of grapes, cherries or berries; a cereal bowl of salad, eg lettuce, tomatoes, cucumber and celery.

What not to pack—Fruit tinned in syrup, dried fruit (eg raisins, sultanas) and processed fruit bars (eg fruit winders, fruit flakes etc). These are high in sugar and can cause tooth decay.

Bread

What to pack—White or wholemeal bread, rolls or baguettes, toast, plain bagels, wheaten, soda, potato or pitta bread, spread thinly with a little margarine, low-fat spread or butter; plain bread sticks or crackers, a small sandwich with a sugar-free filling such as tomato, tuna, chicken, cheese etc.

What not to pack—Sugary spreads including jam, honey, marmalade or chocolate spread as these are harmful to teeth. Stay clear of cereal bars or sweetened breads and pastries eg pancakes, scones (plain and fruit), fruit bread, croissants and Danish pastries as these can contain a lot of sugar and/or fat and salt.

For more information refer to the leaflets *Healthy breaks for schools* and *Are you packing a healthy lunch?* at www.publichealthagency.org/publications. For information about healthy packed lunches, visit www.enjoyhealthyeating.info



Dates for your diary

Tues 8 September 2015	International Literacy Day	Children will be participating in special Literacy activities
Wed 9 September	Year Five Science Special (for Year Five children only).	Children must be accompanied by a parent.
Thursday 17 September	Year Two Tesco Trip	
Curriculum Meetings (information about what your child will be learning this year)		
Tues 22 September 2015	6.00pm	Year One
	6.30pm	Year Two
	7.00pm	Year Three
Wed 23 September 2015	6.00pm	Year Four
	6.30pm	Year Five
	7.00pm	Year Six
	7.30pm	Year Seven
Fri 2 October 2015	Years 1—3 Sponsored Bounce—further information will follow.	
Fri 16 October 2015	Nursery sponsored cycle	
19 October—23 October 2015	Parent—Teacher Meetings	Parents/Guardians will receive an appointment time to meet with the teacher. Further information will follow.
Fri 23 October 2015	Hallowe'en Fancy Dress	Parade times will follow.
Wed 9 December 2015	6.30-7.30pm	Open Night
Fri 11 December 2015	9.30am	Nursery Christmas Concert
Tues 15 December 2015	9.30am	Year One Christmas Concert
Tues 15 December 2015	11.00am	Year Three (Miss Black) and Year Four (Mr Jones) Christmas Concert
Wed 16 December 2015	9.30am	Year Two (Mrs Cross) and Year Two/Three (Mrs Cunning) Christmas Concert
Wed 23 December 2015	Half Day	12 noon finish

Autism Workshop

RAFT (Reaching Autism Families Together) have informed us that Autism NI are offering a free workshop to parents/carers with a child diagnosed with ASD or pending a diagnosis. The information session will take place in Whiteabbey Community Centre on 15 September from 9.30am to 12.30pm. The course outline is:

- Main features associated with Autistic Spectrum Disorder
- Implications of living with an individual who has ASD
- Support systems to put in place
- Strategies to support your family

If you are interested in attending, please contact the school office for a booking form.

Living and Learning Together