

# RETURN TO SCHOOL INFO SEPTEMBER 2025

Dear Parents/Guardians,

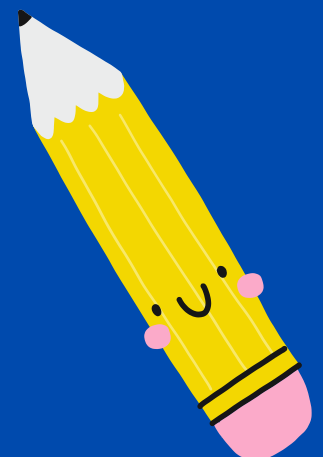
Welcome to our Summer Newsletter!

We want to share some important restart information for our return to school on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025.

If you have any queries, please contact school when we reopen on Tuesday 26th August for all staff.

I hope you have all enjoyed the summer break and we look forward to seeing you all very soon!

Best Wishes,  
Gerard Barrett





# School Start and Finish Times

A B C

School returns Monday 1st September for normal school day for Year 2-7.

School starts at: **8.50am**

School finishes at: **2pm Year 1- 3 (1.45pm on a Friday)**  
**3pm Year 4-7 (2pm on a Friday)**



## Sunflower Room and The Hive



School returns Monday 1<sup>st</sup> September.  
The school day is based on each pupil's individual needs.

*Parents will be contacted by class teacher.*

## New Year 1 Pupils

All of our new Year 1 pupils were provided with a welcome pack in June which included details of start date and school start/finish times. If you do not have this information, please contact the office on 26th August.



# Important Information



**Breakfast Club** begins on **Monday 1st September** at **8.00am**. Breakfast club costs £1 per pupil. No booking is required but **last admittance is 8.30am** to ensure children have time to eat their breakfast before school starts.



The **pupil entrance** (side of building) will **open at 8.50am** and **close at 9.10am**. Pupils will be collected by their class teacher at 8.50am. **Parents are asked not to enter the school building with their children at drop off**. Anyone arriving **later than 9.10am** should **report to the main office** in order to be marked present.



**Afterschool Clubs** will **begin on Monday 1st September** at the usual times of 2.00pm - 3.00pm (**costing £4**) and 3.00pm - 4.00pm (**costing £4**). **If you wish your child to stay from 2pm-4pm this will cost £8**. This service will require advance booking and payment made via the School Money app at the start of each week. <https://support.eduspot.co.uk/guide/parent-user-guide-schoolmoney/> Click the link to set up the app. Further details regarding our Afterschool Clubs will be released in the coming weeks.

# Drop off and Collection of Children



Parents should NOT DRIVE up the school lane. **Please park in the Metropolitan car park.** Please do not park at bottom of the lane/ housing development.

Teachers will collect children from the Pupil Entrance at **8.50am**. Parents are asked not to enter school building at drop off.

Teachers will walk children down the lane for collection at their finishing time.

Pupils attending Afterschool Club until 4pm can be collected from the main entrance.

**Sunflower Room and The Hive**  
Pupils from our SEN provisions can be dropped off and *collected* from the pupil entrance in vehicles.

# School Uniform

## Uniform Checklist

Navy Skirt/Pinafore

Navy/ Grey Trousers

Blue polo shirt

School jumper

Black school shoes/trainers

*\*No coloured trainers/shoes\**

Please ensure all items are  
clearly labelled with your  
child's name.

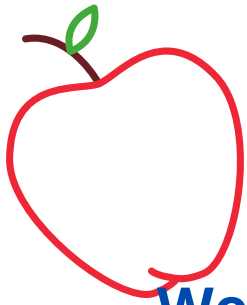


## PE Uniform

White t-shirt  
Navy shorts/tracksuit  
bottoms/leggings

No sports tops please

*Children should bring PE gear  
into school on their allocated  
day (do not wear PE gear into  
school).*



# Healthy Break and Canteen

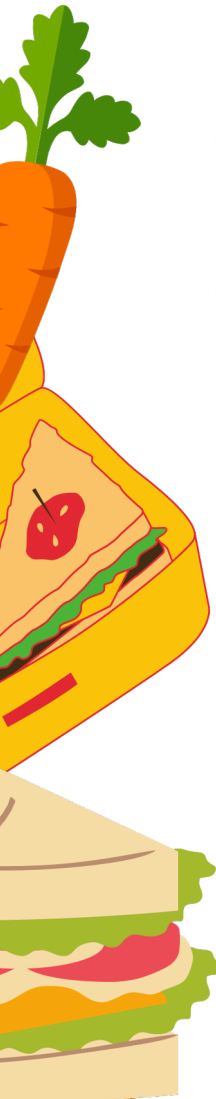


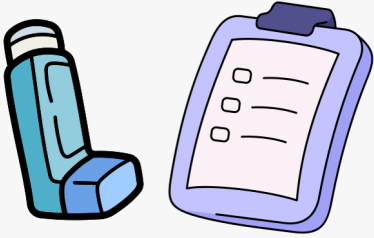
We operate a Healthy Break Policy and pupils are encouraged to bring a healthy snack for break e.g fruit, vegetable or small sandwich.

## A FEW REMINDERS:

- Fizzy drinks and energy drinks are **NOT** permitted.
- Foods containing **NUTS** are **NOT** permitted due to children with allergies. This includes Nutella Spread.
- Canteen Menu can be viewed online at: <https://st-marys-star-of-the-sea-primary-school.secure-primariesite.net/school-dinner-menu/>
- **School Money app** should be used to pay for school dinners in advance. (£2.60 per day)

**Anyone entitled to Free School Meals** should apply online through the Education Authority website.





# MEDICAL INFORMATION



It is very important that we know about all medical conditions that your child has. If anything has changed over the summer, please contact the school prior to your child starting school.



All children who have a prescribed inhaler (including chamber if needed) should bring one to school with their name clearly labelled on it. We will keep this in school for them to use.

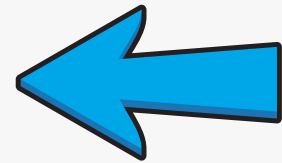


All children who require Epi Pens for allergies should provide school with one to keep on site. All children with an Epi Pen have a Care Plan and school require a copy of this also. Especially if it has been updated during the summer.



As per School Policy, teachers do not administer antibiotics or other medicines. If your child needs this during the school day, a parent/guardian will have to come and administer this.

# Free School Meals and Uniform Grant information



**Follow the steps to apply**

**Applying for Free School Meals & Uniform Allowance**

**If you require help...**  
[www.eani.org.uk/fsm](http://www.eani.org.uk/fsm)  
 028 9047 0233  
[mealsanduniform@eani.org.uk](mailto:mealsanduniform@eani.org.uk)

**1. Are you eligible?**  
 You must be:  
 • In receipt of a qualifying benefit  
 • Or  
 • Be an Asylum Seeker supported by the Home Office Asylum Support Assessment Team (ASAT)

**Qualifying Benefits:**  
 • Income Support  
 • Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance  
 • Income Related Employment and Support Allowance  
 • Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit  
 • Universal credit and have net household earnings not exceeding the approved threshold.

**Special Diet:**  
 • You may be eligible for Free School Meals if your child has a statement of Special Educational Needs and is designated to require a Special Diet.  
 • You can apply via EA Connect

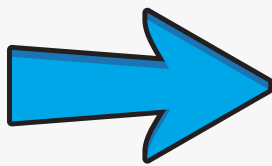
**2. What documentation do you need?**  
 You will be asked to upload proof that you are receiving a qualifying benefit:  
 • Your most recent Universal Credit Claimant Statement or  
 • Proof of Benefit letter (if you are in receipt of Income Support, Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Related Employment and Support Allowance or the Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit)

**3. What else do you need?**  
 • National Insurance Number  
 • Children's names  
 • Dates of Birth  
 • Schools they will be attending  
 • Address  
 • E-mail and telephone number  
 • Bank or building society account and sort code details.

**4. Where do you apply?**  
 Apply for Free School Meals and Uniform Allowance for the new school year beginning September, through the Education Authority's online portal, EA Connect. If you haven't already registered an EA Connect account, it's quick and easy to do. Information can be found on the EA website.

**5. What happens next?**  
 We aim to process applications within 4 weeks. However, in the busy period of June to September, this can take up to 5 weeks. Please do not contact EA for an update on your application within the 5 weeks of submitting your application, if you have provided incorrect or insufficient supporting documentation, you will receive a tailored email advising you to resubmit your application with details of the correct documentation you need to provide.  
 You will receive an email from EA once your application has been approved and processed.

**ea eacconnect**



**You will need to provide proof of benefits you are entitled to**

**ea Education Authority**

**FREE SCHOOL MEALS AND UNIFORM ALLOWANCE**

**You may be entitled if you receive ANY of the following benefits:**

- ✓ Income Support
- ✓ Income Related Employment and Support Allowance
- ✓ Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance
- ✓ Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit
- ✓ Universal Credit and have net household earnings not exceeding the approved threshold







**eaconnect**  
[www.eani.org.uk/fsm](http://www.eani.org.uk/fsm)

## Free School Meals Allowance

### Special Diet applications

APPLY NOW 

-  Log in to EA Connect
-  Check eligibility
-  Pupil has Statement of SEN (Stage 3) and requires a medically prescribed special diet
-  Apply before the end of July to have support in place for 1 September



<https://www.eani.org.uk/financial-help/free-school-meals-uniform-grants>

CLICK HERE 



# Attendance



Good attendance is extremely important for your child and as a school, we are responsible for monitoring this for each child. Percentage attendances are reported to the Education Welfare Officer on a regular basis.



## 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<br>1 Week and 4 Days of Learning Missed   | Satisfactory |
| 90% Attendance  | 19 Days of Absence<br>3 Weeks and 4 Days of Learning Missed | Poor         |
| 85% Attendance  | 28 Days of Absence<br>5 Weeks and 3 Days of Learning Missed | Very Poor    |
| 80% Attendance  | 38 Days of Absence<br>7 Weeks and 3 Days of Learning Missed | Unacceptable |
| 75% Attendance  | 46 Days of Absence<br>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 the school year – that's nearly 4 school weeks.

## If your child's attendance falls below 85% we will:

- Check that reasons for absence has been reported
- Reach out on a pastoral capacity to offer support
- Send an official letter from school to acknowledge attendance has fallen below 85%
- Refer to EWO if no improvement/if necessary





**Pupils are NOT permitted to bring mobile phones, smart watches or any device which is capable of recording or taking images into school.**

**If you require your child to bring a phone to school they must give their phone to the school secretary before they enter their classroom. Children can collect their phone from the office at the end of the day.**

# What if I have a concern or worry? Who do I talk to?



If you have a concern you should make an appointment to speak with the class teacher first via the main office.

You will meet with the class teacher and depending on the concern, a referral to another staff member or team may be required.

If needed, another meeting will be scheduled for you to meet with suggested staff member or team e.g. SEN

If there are still unresolved concerns or worries then a meeting with the Vice-Principal/Principal will be arranged.

## SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN)

Learning Support :  
Mrs J Hinds  
Miss L Brady (VP)

## CHILD PROTECTION TEAM (CP)

Designated Teacher:  
Mr G Barrett  
Deputy Designated Teacher  
Miss R McCusker



# Keeping in touch!



**02890 370023**

**Please leave a message if there is no response and we will get back to you.**



**info@stmarysstarofthesea.belfast.ni.sch.uk**



**www.stmaryssos.co.uk**



**St.Mary's Star of the Sea PS Belfast**



**The Seesaw App is used to communicate and share information with Parents/Guardians. Please ensure you have this downloaded and activated on your phone. Teachers will share a QR code with parents at the start of the year.**



# Back to School Reminders



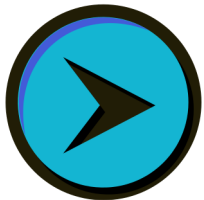
Breakfast Club and Afterschool Club are available from 1st September. More details regarding clubs will be shared soon.



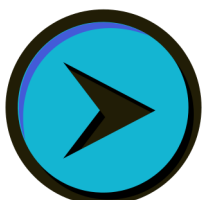
**Cars are NOT permitted in the Staff Car Park.** We respectfully ask that you do not drive up the school lane.



Please use the Metropolitan Church car park to safely drop children off and collect from school. **Do not block driveways or roads.**



New Year 1 pupils already have their start times. If anyone does not have this information please contact the school from 26th August.



As always, Thank You for the continued support!

We look forward to seeing you all in September. Enjoy the rest of the holidays!

