

St James's Jotter

September 2016



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 also like to welcome our new Vice Principal, Mrs Julie Hinds and welcome Mr McNamee back to St James's following his time with Inclusion and Diversity Service.

The staff of St James's are looking forward to a busy, exciting year ahead filled with lots of wonderful learning opportunities for our children. As always, we look forward to working in partnership with you to develop your child and to continue to raise standards and develop our school. Paula Cunningham

Shared Education Signature Project

We are delighted to be starting Year 2 of our Shared Education initiative with Whitehouse Primary School and Nursery Unit. This year, the project will involve Year Five and Six children in STEM modules, the Nursery in the Forest School programme and the whole school in working towards the Rights Respecting School Award. The staff from both schools will also be collaborating on a number of occasions. We have an exciting and busy year ahead!

NUMICON

We are delighted to be introducing Numicon into our school this year thanks to the PTA. Numicon is a multi sensory mathematics teaching programme. Thanks to funding from the PTA, we have been able to purchase this wonderful resource for our Foundation Stage although other classes will also avail of the resource. The teachers and children are very excited to be using it! We would like to extend our thanks to the PTA for purchasing Numicon.



Beginning of Year School Mass

Our Beginning of Year School Mass will take place on Tuesday 20 September. We are delighted that Fr Alexander will be saying this special Mass in the Assembly Hall. Due to space, we are unable to invite parents/guardians.

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. Please note that if children wear their polo shirt for PE they must change into a fresh polo shirt afterwards. 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.

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. Unfortunately Mrs Brown and Mrs Thompson are unable to pass on messages/money to teachers.

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 is for disabled access and 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 and for health and safety reasons, we ask that children in Years 2 to 7 are left at the door and make their own way to the classroom. 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.



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 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.

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 and Mrs Magill's Year 2 class can be collected from the children's entrance foyer. The fire escape at the top of the green corridor should not be used. Mrs Cross/Mrs Dallat's 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 3 children can be collected from the main door at the bottom of the green corridor until Hallowe'en. After Hallowe'en, when Year 3 children stay until 3pm, they can be collected from the children's entrance foyer. 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. Children who are not collected promptly will be taken to the office.

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	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	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 Hinds Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection

Mrs Higgins 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 Hinds.

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

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. We are very grateful to Mrs McMahon who works tirelessly in our garden and we would love to get her some help!

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.

No dogs allowed

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



Trip to Tesco

Our Year 2 classes will be visiting Tesco in Newtownabbey this week 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 £253.65 since our Easy Fundraising account was opened and we have 45 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!

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. All children on a bike or scooter should wear a helmet.

CONTACT DETAILS

Please ensure that the office has the correct contact details for you. Already, on a number of occasions, we have been unable to contact parents/guardians due to having an out of date phone number. It is vitally important that you inform us if you change your phone number and/or address as soon as possible.

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. An appropriate book level will be assigned to each child based on the results of their 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 are completed and signed every night. 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. 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 and www.bit.ly/enjoylunch.



Autism Workshop

We are delighted to be hosting a RAFT (Reaching Autism Families Together) autism information session in the school on Thursday 20 October from 6.30pm—9.30pm. This session is open to anyone who wishes to come along even if they do not have children at our school. Details will be sent home on a separate flyer. Please extend the invitation to family and friends.



PTA

The PTA held their AGM on 12 September and a new Committee was elected. It was great to see some new faces at the AGM however, the PTA will need a lot of help from other parents/guardians at the events this year and not just those on the Committee. With all schools facing financial hardship in light of budget constraints, the work of our PTA is even more important and without their energy, dedication and commitment, our school and our children would not be able to avail of much needed resources. I would urge you all to please support the PTA and try to make it to the next meeting on 10 October at 6pm in the staff room.

Maiden Voyage Dance Company

Our Year 2 children are going to see a performance of 'Quartet for 15 Chairs' in Theatre at the Mill on Tuesday 18 October. They will also have the opportunity to participate in a dance workshop on Monday 17 October.

"It was amazing! Visually exciting, fast music to keep pace with the dancing and comedy! Children laughed out loud and were captivated..." **Audience Member, Belfast Children's Festival**

Amazing the Space

On 21 September, 'Amazing the Space', a youth-led peacebuilding initiative, will bring together over 3500 young people at the Eikon Exhibition Centre, Maze-Long Kesh to celebrate the International Day of Peace.

We are delighted that Mrs Dallat will be attending this event with three children from Year 6 and 7. It will be a wonderful experience and we look forward to hearing all about it.

No Pens Day Wednesday

We will be participating in No Pens Day on Wednesday 5 October. No Pens Day Wednesday encourages schools to put down their pens and pencils and have a day of speaking and listening activities. We look forward to an interesting and enjoyable day!



Christmas Card Fundraiser

Every child in our school has been invited to design a Christmas Card. They have each been given a template in school on which to draw their masterpiece! Once completed, their drawings will be sent off and made into a pack of 12 Christmas cards for parents to purchase at a cost of £5. This is a great fundraiser for our school as, for each pack of cards purchased, the school receives £1.40 and parents get very special Christmas cards!



Living and Learning Together

Dates for your diary

Tuesday 20 September	Year Two (Mrs Cross/Mrs Dallat) Tesco Trip		
Wednesday 21 September	Year Two (Mrs Magill) Tesco Trip		
Curriculum Meetings (information about what your child will be learning this year)			
Tues 20 September 2016	6.00pm	Year One	If you are unable to arrange child minding for the curriculum meeting you can bring your children along—a teacher will be available to look after the children.
	6.30pm	Year Two	
Wed 21 September 2016	6.00pm	Year Seven	
	6.30pm	Year Five	
	7.00pm	Year Six	
Wed 21 September 2016	United Nations Day of Peace Amazing the Space (3 children)		
26—27 September 2016	School closed for Staff Development		
17 October—21 October 2016	Parent—Teacher Meetings Parents/Guardians will receive an appointment time to meet with the teacher. Further information will follow.		
Mon 17 October 2016	Year 2 Dance Workshops Maiden Voyage Dance Company		
Tues 18 October 2016	Year 2 Theatre at the Mill Maiden Voyage Dance Company		
Thurs 20 October 2016	RAFT Autism Information Session 6.30-9.30pm		
Thurs 27 October 2016	PTA Hallowe'en Disco (Fancy Dress)		
Fri 28 October 2016	Hallowe'en Fancy Dress Parade times will follow		
	Half Day		
Mon 7 November 2016	School reopens		
Mon 28 November 2016	School closed for Staff Development		
14—18 November 2016	Anti Bullying Week		
Wed 7 December 2016	6.30-7.30pm	Open Night	
Fri 9 December 2016	9.30am	Nursery Christmas Concert	
Tues 13 December 2016	9.30am	Year One Christmas Concert	
Wed 14 December 2015	9.30am	Year Two (Mrs Cross/Mrs Dallat and Mrs Magill)	
		Christmas Concert	
Thurs 15 December 2016	11.00am	Year Three and Year Four Christmas Concert (Mrs Cunning, Mrs Hinds and Mr Jones)	
Wed 23 December 2016	Half Day	12 noon finish	
Mon 9 January 2017	Children return to school		