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Newsletter 02

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**CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF EDUCATION AT ST EUGENE’S PS.**

We have just completed our 60th September of education at St Eugene’s PS, Victoria Bridge. For six decades now our school has been serving the community of Victoria Bridge and surrounding areas and we couldn’t be more proud of everything that has been achieved in this time. It is a very exciting time for everyone connected to our school and we hope to celebrate this wonderful occasion throughout this academic year with press releases and promotion in the community. It is hoped that Covid-19 restrictions will ease as we progress through 2020/2021 and that we will be able to have a School Mass, Dinner Dance or Tea Party and plenty of memorabilia for everyone who has been a part of our incredible school over the years to come, enjoy, reminisce and look ahead to the next 60 years!

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| Thurs  22nd | **SCHOOL CLOSED TO PUPILS**  Reporting to Parents via telephone. |
| Fri  23rd | **SCHOOL CLOSED TO PUPILS**  Staff Development Day |
| Mon 26th – Fri 30th  (inclusive) | **SCHOOL CLOSED FOR HALLOWEEN HOLIDAYS** |

A copy of this newsletter can be downloaded from our website [www.steugenesps.com](http://www.steugenesps.com) at any time. We encourage our parents, grandparents and extended families to like and follow our Facebook and Twitter accounts to be kept up to date with all our exciting news at St Eugene’s PS. *Please read all details on this newsletter carefully as it contains information about remote learning situations and online platforms for pupil engagement.*

**October Diary Dates**

**ATTENDANCE**

We understand that children may be absent from school more than usual due to restrictions around Covid-19, children presenting with a new continuous cough, a temperature above 37.8, or loss of sense of taste and/or smell must not attend school until they have been tested and receive a negative result. Parents can obtain a test for their child by contacting the NHS 111, however, we have found that it is often easier to get a test by booking online at www.gov.uk. It is important to keep Miss Gormley informed if your child presents with symptoms so that she can advise you about returning to school. Please remember that we are following DE guidance and must continue to do so to protect our children and staff.

In the event that your child or a member of your household tests positive you must inform the school straight away. Your details will be kept confidential and we will never name a child or member of staff to anyone other than the PHA. All members of our community will be notified of a positive case via text. Those who have been identified as being in contact with the infected person will receive guidance on what to do next, such as isolating and/or seeking a test.

I would like to thank the entire school community for all their efforts in continuing to keep our school as safe as possible during such difficult times when infection rates are at such a high in our area. Please keep up all your hard work and remain as vigilant as possible as we progress into the winter months.

**PARENT-TEACHER TELEPHONE MEETINGS 2020**

This year our Parent-Teacher meetings will be conducted via telephone, in line with the latest DE guidance. These phone calls will take place on Thursday 22nd of October, **please note that the school will be closed to pupils on this date.** Your child’s teacher will call you at your scheduled time from a withheld number and the call will last no more than 10 minutes. It is vital that you make a telephone appointment to discuss your child’s progress at school and any concerns that there may be. Mrs Gallagher will be taking bookings for Parent – Teacher telephone meetings from 10am on Monday 12th of October, please contact the school office from this date to book your time slot.

**HALLOWEEN BREAK**

The last day at school for pupils during this half of the term will be Wednesday 21st of October. Pupils will be off school on Thursday 22nd and Friday the 23rd of October for Parent/Teacher telephone meetings and staff development. Children will remain off school the following week for mid-term break and will return on Monday 2nd of November. We hope that all of our families will have a safe and relaxing break after such an intense half term back at school.

**HOMEWORK**

Our homework arrangements are currently working well for pupils, parents and staff. Remember that we are operating on a rotational basis of an ‘A’ and ‘B’ homework pack. Children will receive their homework pack for the week on a Monday and must not return it to school until the Friday morning, where it will be quarantined over the weekend. The following week the children will receive their ‘B’ pack and follow the same system. *It is important that children remember to return their homework folder each Friday as failure to do so causes operational issues with this system.*

**STAFF CHANGE IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

You will all be aware that Mrs McDermott is expecting her first child later this year. Due to Covid-19 it is necessary for Mrs McDermott to take additional precautions and assume alternative roles within our school. For the remainder of October and November Mrs McDermott will facilitate online learning each Wednesday and Thursday for those children isolating individually, part of her role will also involve planning and preparation to assist staff in school. We know that the boys and girls in Reception, P1 and P2 will miss the face to face contact with Mrs McDermott in class, but we have no doubt that they will adapt to this change well. We look forward to welcoming Miss Eibhlin McAnaw back to our school to fill Mrs McDermott’s classroom position. Miss McAnaw previously taught in our school in 2018. She has already been in to spend a day with our Foundation Stage children and we are excited for everything that she will bring to our school community.

**BLENDED/REMOTE LEARNING**

Our staff have been working incredibly hard putting procedures into place to prepare for the event of a whole class bubble having to isolate. Children in P3-P7 have already received their emergency class bubble isolation pack and children in R/1/2 will receive theirs in the coming days. This pack must be only used in the event of the whole class bubble having to isolate.

All children in P1-7 will have received their username and password for Studyladder, it is important that children access this regularly and complete the tasks set by their teacher. P2-7 also have usernames and passwords for Mathletics. Mathletics and Studyladder can be used in addition to the isolation packs and in conjunction with Seesaw.

* **SEESAW**

You will receive details of how to set up student and family access to Seesaw over the course of the next week. It is vital that all families and students activate their accounts, so that we are best prepared for emergency situations.

Seesaw is a platform for student engagement, where teachers can empower students to create, reflect, share, and collaborate. In the event of your child not being able to attend school due to COVID-19 we will use Seesaw as our online learning platform, where children’s learning can be documented. Students will be able to access pupil work/activities and “show what they know” using photos, videos, drawings etc. They will be able to receive feedback from their class teacher. Seesaw will also be used throughout the school year to share information and photographs between home and school. In using these platforms, it is important to remember that teachers will only access these accounts during school hours and will not be available outside of these times.

If you have any difficulties accessing any of these platforms you should telephone the school.

**RELAX KIDS & SCHOOL COUNSELLING SERVICE**

Given the times that we are in, we are feeling incredibly blessed to be able to offer both Relax Kids and a School Counselling Service to our boys and girls. This has all been made possible thanks to funding from the Gemma McHale Foundation. We are forever grateful for all the initiatives that the McHale family have been able to offer to our school and we know that their tireless work has made such a difference to the lives of so many young people not just in our school, but across the surrounding areas – thank you!

**FLU IMMUNISATION PROGRAMME**

Flu immunisation for our pupils has been delayed until the 1st of December 2020 due to an issue with the supply. If you have not returned your letter for the school nurse, please do so as soon as possible, even if you do not give consent for your child to be immunised.

**FIRST HOLY COMMUNION**

Congratulations to our P5 boys and girls who made their First Holy Communion on Saturday 26th of September in St Theresa’s Church, Sion Mills. It was a very special day with just the 8 children from our school, who waited so long to receive the Sacrament. We would like to thank Fr Canning and Mrs Connolly for all their work in preparing the children so well and also Mr Gormley who provided the beautiful music on the piano throughout the Mass.

**FRIENDS OF ST EUGENE’S PS (F.O.S.E)**

Whilst Friends of St Eugene’s activity is currently paused to allow us to focus keeping our school community safe and attend to matters that are business critical, we would like to offer an invitation to any of our new families who would be interested in getting involved in the group when business resumes. F.O.S.E are always on the lookout for new members, if you or any member of our school community are interested in getting involved leave a message at the office with Mrs Gallagher and we will put you in touch with the group.

**COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL**

In an effort to reduce paper and stay in line with the DE guidance to reduce items moving between home and school we are moving towards digital communication. You will be aware that our text service is now running from the beginning of the summer and that this has been used to alert you to updates and documents on our school website. You will find our latest policies and school holiday dates in the ‘files’ section. Newsletters and correspondence can be found on the home page or in the ‘news’ section. Our social media accounts complement our website by showcasing the work that goes on within our school and we hope that our Seesaw account will add yet another dimension to sharing teaching and learning with our families. Remember that due to Covid-19 staff are not permitted to engage in face to face meetings with parents but will happily discuss any issues with you via telephone appointment arranged through Mrs Gallagher.