**St Mary’s & St Gerard’s Bulletin 14th February 2024**

Dear Parents & Guardians,

A little update before we break for a well-deserved Mid-Term here in Mary’s & Gerard’s.

**P.A.**

I had a very positive meeting with the new P.A. Heads: Arlene & Jemma. I look forward to working with our P.A. to support the new and existing events. I also look forward to your input and contributions . Our school is a community and we are fortunate to have an enthusiastic and committed P.A. in our school.

**Safer Internet Day**

We held a Safer Internet Day assembly on Wednesday led by 6th Class . The theme was Online Safety. The key messages that we shared with the pupils were: Inclusion, Block Bullies & Tell a trusted adult.

We will continue to reinforce these messages through our displays, lessons and discussions. Please reinforce this message at home with your child.

There are useful links here for keeping your children safe online: [Webwise - Internet Safety](https://www.webwise.ie/)

If you have any concerns around cyber-bullying or your child has been impacted by online issues, please let us know so that we can help.

**Safe Use of devices in school**

We often use ipads in class as part of our Digital Learning. Our access to sites is managed by a central site so we are confident that the pupils will not be exposed to unsuitable content in school.

As we are all aware, mobile phones are not permitted in school , so there is no risk of a pupil being pictured/recorded/ receiving an unsuitable message in school.

Since Christmas , many pupils are wearing smart watches. We will be looking at how these fit into our Mobile Phone Policy and listening to our pupils, parents and teachers about this issue. I have spoken to 3rd- 6th about this.

**Smart Phones Ban ; P.A. Talk**

Our P.A. have linked in with the P.A. in our neighbouring schools and will soon be arranging a meeting regarding the Banning Of Smart phones for Primary Children in the Community. This is a parent-led initiative which has taken off in Greystones. Our staff welcome this debate and support this initiative for our pupils in their homes. We see the initiative as being targeted at the younger pupils who do not yet have a phone. We welcome putting this off for as long as possible! I look forward to the meeting and to learning more about this community initiative.

**Yard Works**

We will be starting Yard Remediation Works in some parts of our yard on Wednesday 14th February until Sunday 25th February. This will mean that parking will be restricted in the Church at the 2.30 pick up as the contractors will be working afternoon shifts.

**Please try to park and stride from the Bog Meadow or encourage your child to walk home if it is safe to do so for the duration of these works. If you do drive, please leave the car park promptly so the contractors can get parked. Thank you.**

We will have a Safety Plan in place for this period and it will also impact on the use of our yards at the rear . It will be worth it when the works have been completed.

**Electrical Works**

Our electrical works are continuing in the school. We look forward to having a brighter school with upgraded wiring and sockets and more energy efficient lighting by the time the electrical crew are finished their work!

**Author Zoom**

Ms Mc Connell’s 4th Class attended a Zoom Event with author ,Siobhan Mc Dermott last week. Siobhan is a past pupil , who recently secured a book deal for her children’s book. We were very excited to join the zoom and we will be reading her novel:Paper Dragons ! You can find out more about this here: <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/authors/2284818/siobhan-mcdermott/>

**Next year’s calendar**

Our dates are not set yet so please do not book holidays in advance of this. When I have the calendar and it is approved by the B.O.M. it will be shared with parents. I would like to politely remind parents that holidays should not be booked during term time. Teachers cannot give students work if they are being taken out of school for holidays during term time.

**Other news**

Pancake Tuesday was celebrated in school with lots of cooking, recipes as gaeilge and art work. The sacramental classes attend mass on Ash Wednesday and we celebrated Valentines Day today as a Friendship Day!

We will have a **Musical Talent Assembly** when we return. Children who play instruments and who would like to perform can let Ms Seoighe know.

Ireland Reads is an initiative to promote reading, organised by the libraries. I encourage you to visit the library over the break and to get involved. [Get lost in a good book for Ireland Reads. Here's what I'm reading ...](https://www.irelandreads.ie/)

**Dates for your diary:**

Thursday 14th & Friday 15th February: Mid-Term -closed

Thursday March 7th: WORLD BOOK DAY DRESS UP DAY & P.A. Book Sale

Friday 8th March; Closed for referendum

March 14th: Closed for Staff Training (Maths Curriculum)

Monday 18th March:St Patrick's Bank Holiday Closure:

Thank you all for your support ,I wish all our staff, pupils and families a lovely mid-term break!

Kind regards,

Deirdre Morgan

Principal