



St. Mary's on the Hill P.S. October Information 2025

Welcome to October's Information Update!

We're delighted with how well the children have settled into the new school year. Their enthusiasm, curiosity, and positive attitude have made for a fantastic start, and it's been wonderful to see them engaging so well with their learning. As we move into our second month, we're continuing to build on these strong foundations—focusing on developing their skills, deepening their understanding, and encouraging independence and confidence in all areas of school life.

A sincere thank you to everyone who attended the curriculum talks in September. These sessions provided valuable insights into what your child will be learning this year and how you can support them at home. If you weren't able to attend, don't worry—the key information is available on the school website for you to access at your convenience.

We truly value the partnership between home and school. The support you provide at home—whether it's reading together, practicing key skills, or simply talking about the school day—makes a real difference. Your continued involvement is greatly appreciated and plays a vital role in your child's progress and wellbeing.

October is shaping up to be a busy and exciting month, with a number of events and activities planned. From seasonal celebrations to learning-focused initiatives, there's lots to look forward to. You'll find more details throughout this Sway, and we hope you find this format easy to navigate—especially if

you're viewing it on your phone. We've designed it to be user-friendly and accessible, so you can stay informed and connected wherever you are.

*If there's anything you'd like more information about, or if you have suggestions for what could be included in future updates, we'd love to hear from you. Please feel free to contact the school via email at **info@stmarys.newtownabbey.ni.sch.uk**.*

Thank you once again for your continued support. We look forward to a successful and enjoyable October together!


Would you like help drafting sections for the upcoming events or any other part of the newsletter?

Kind regards

Mr. Matthew O'Brien

Principal

📅 October Behaviour Focus: Respect




OUR MISSION

In St. Mary's on the Hill P.S. we will create a safe, nurturing, and inclusive environment.

As a school, we will inspire all in our community to develop their knowledge and skills, enabling everyone to achieve their full potential.

VALUES OF ST. MARY'S ON THE HILL P.S.

RESPECT • KINDNESS
RESILIENCE • GROWTH • CURIOSITY
CREATIVITY • FUN • INTEGRITY



*At **St. Mary's on the Hill**, we are proud of the way our pupils behave and treat one another. As we begin a new month, we're introducing a **school-wide behavioural focus** to help strengthen our values and support positive choices.*

This Month's Value: Respect

Throughout October, we'll be encouraging pupils to show **Respect** — in the classroom, in the playground, and beyond.

Respect means:

- *Listening carefully when someone is speaking*
 - *Using kind and thoughtful words*
 - *Taking care of school property and shared spaces*
 - *Valuing others' opinions and feelings*
-

Reinforcing Respect in School

Respect will be a key theme in our **assemblies**, and staff will be reinforcing respectful behaviour in everyday interactions. It's a value that helps create a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment for everyone.

How You Can Support at Home

We kindly ask parents and carers to support this focus by encouraging respectful behaviour at home. Talk to your child about what respect looks like — especially when listening to others or following instructions.

Together, we can help our children grow into kind, considerate, and respectful individuals.

What's Next?

Each month, we'll highlight a different school value to help guide behaviour and build character. October is all about **Respect** — and we're excited to see it in action!

🌱 Garden of Hope: A Blessing and Planting Ceremony 🌱



A Moment of Reflection, Renewal, and Unity

*On 6th October, our community will come together for a deeply meaningful event: the **blessing of the Garden of Hope** and the **planting of the Tree of Hope**. This special ceremony marked a moment of healing, remembrance, and collective strength.*

🌱 **The Garden of Hope**

Nestled in a quiet corner of our grounds, the Garden of Hope is a space dedicated to peace, reflection, and resilience. It was created to honor those we've lost, support those who are healing, and inspire hope for the future.

📖 Planting the Tree of Hope

The planting of the Tree of Hope is at the heart of the ceremony. As soil met roots, we were reminded that hope, like a tree, grows stronger when nurtured together. This tree will stand as a living symbol of growth, endurance, and unity

📖 Looking Ahead

The Garden of Hope is open to all. Whether you seek a quiet moment, a place to reflect, or simply a breath of fresh air, this space is here for you. We invite everyone to visit, contribute, and continue growing hope together.

📖💎 The Book Fair is Back This October!



A Week of Stories, Discovery, and Imagination

We're thrilled to announce that the **Book Fair** is returning to school from **Monday 13th October to Friday 17th October**! It's more than just a chance to buy books — it's a celebration of reading, imagination, and community.

Why Visit the Book Fair?

- **Inspire a Love of Reading** Help your child discover new authors, genres, and stories that spark curiosity and creativity.
 - **Support Our School** Every purchase helps raise vital funds that go directly back into enriching our school resources and learning environment.
 - **Fun for All Ages** From picture books to page-turning adventures, there's something for every reader.
-

Key Details

- **Dates:** Monday 13th – Friday 17th October
 - **Location:** School
-

Let's Grow Readers Together

Whether your child is a budding bookworm or just beginning their reading journey, the Book Fair is a wonderful opportunity to explore the joy of books. Come along, browse, and help us make this event a success!

Would you like help adding images, creating a banner, or designing a visual layout for this in Sway?

?? Maths Week Ireland 2025: Let's Get Number-Crunching!



Celebrating the Magic of Maths — 11th to 20th October

*It's that time of year again! **Maths Week Ireland** is being celebrated across the country from **11th to 20th October**, and we're joining in with a week full of fun, learning, and discovery.*

*?? **What's Happening in School?***

*Throughout the week, pupils will take part in a variety of **exciting mathematical activities** designed to spark curiosity and build confidence in problem-solving. From puzzles and games to challenges and creative maths tasks — there's something for everyone!*

*?? **Maths Workshops for Parents***

*We're delighted to offer a **Maths Workshop for P2–P4 parents** during Maths Week. This session will provide practical tips and ideas to help support your child's learning at home.*

*?? **Details to follow soon — stay tuned!***

*?? **Join the National Celebration***

Maths Week Ireland is packed with events, challenges, and resources for learners of all ages. Explore what's happening across Ireland and get involved by visiting:

?? www.mathsweek.ie/2025

*?? **Why Maths Week Matters***

“Maths isn’t just about numbers — it’s about thinking, exploring, and solving problems in creative ways.”

Let’s make this week a celebration of curiosity, confidence, and fun with maths!

Would you like help adding visuals, interactive elements, or a banner for this Sway? I can also generate a themed image for Maths Week if you'd like!

🍎 Healthy Eating Week: Fuel Your Body, Feed Your Mind!



Week Beginning 13th October

*We’re excited to launch a special **Healthy Eating Week** in school — a celebration of nutritious choices, tasty snacks, and energizing meals that help us feel our best!*

📌 **What’s Happening?**

Throughout the week, we'll be encouraging pupils to make **healthy food choices** during break and lunch. Whether it's a crunchy carrot, a juicy apple, or a wholegrain sandwich — every healthy bite counts!

Extra Token Rewards!

To make things even more fun, pupils who bring in or choose healthy snacks will receive an **extra token** each day for the house team!

Let's make healthy eating exciting and rewarding!

Why Healthy Eating Matters

Eating well helps us:

-
- Stay focused in class
 - Feel more energetic
 - Build strong bodies and minds
 - Develop lifelong healthy habits
-

Tips for a Healthy Lunchbox

-
- Include fruit or veg every day
 - Choose wholegrain options
 - Avoid sugary drinks — water is best!
 - Keep snacks balanced and portioned
-

Share the Goodness

We'd love to see your healthy lunchbox creations! Pupils can share photos or drawings of their meals during the week.

Let's make this week a celebration of health, happiness, and smart choices. Together, we can build a healthier school community — one bite at a time!

📌 School Safety Reminder: Car Park & Gate Etiquette



Keeping Our Children Safe — Together

*As we continue to prioritize the safety and wellbeing of all pupils, we kindly ask for your cooperation with a few important reminders regarding **drop-off and collection times**.*

📌 **Church Car Park: Safety First**

We understand that mornings and afternoons can be busy, but we must all work together to ensure the car park remains a safe space for everyone.

Please remember:

-
- **Exercise extreme caution** when driving in and out of the car park.
 - **Use designated parking spaces or the drop-off zone only.**
-

-
- ***Make a LEFT TURN when exiting*** the car park to help reduce congestion and improve traffic flow.
-

Your careful driving and consideration make a big difference.

Waiting at the Gate

Thank you for your continued support during morning drop-offs. To help keep things running smoothly and safely:

-
- ***Please do not wait at the gate*** after leaving your child.
 - Moving off-site promptly helps ***free up limited parking spaces***.
 - Crowding at the gate can make it difficult for children to enter and increases the risk of accidents due to its proximity to the car park entrance.
-

Let's work together to keep the entrance clear and safe for all.

Share the Message

*If someone else is responsible for dropping off or collecting your child — a grandparent, relative, or childminder — please **pass this information on**. Everyone's cooperation is essential.*

Thank You

We truly appreciate your support in helping us maintain a safe and welcoming environment for all children and families. Your actions help protect our pupils and make school drop-offs smoother for everyone.



*The application process for free school meals/uniform has commenced. Parents who are currently eligible to apply for free meals/uniform should now complete their application. **Please note that entitlement to free school meals will attract funding to the school's budget.** Whether your child wishes to partake of a meal or not is down to individual choice. We would really encourage parents who fall into this category to **please make an application** as soon as possible for the incoming academic year.*

Application forms may be obtained via the Education Authority website – www.eani.org.uk or alternatively by contacting Free School Meals Section on 02825661350. Forms are also available from the school. Should you have any further queries regarding this, please contact the school office.

Flu Vaccination Programme — Important Information



Flu Vaccination Day: Monday 10th November

We are pleased to confirm that the **Flu Vaccination Programme** will take place in school on **Monday 10th November**. This is an important opportunity to help protect your child and others from seasonal flu.

Flu Action Required

To ensure your child receives the vaccine:

-
- **Please return the completed consent form to your child's class teacher**
 - **Forms will NOT be accepted on the day of the vaccination.** The nursing team will only bring enough vaccines for children whose forms have been submitted in advance.
-

Why It Matters

Vaccinating children helps:

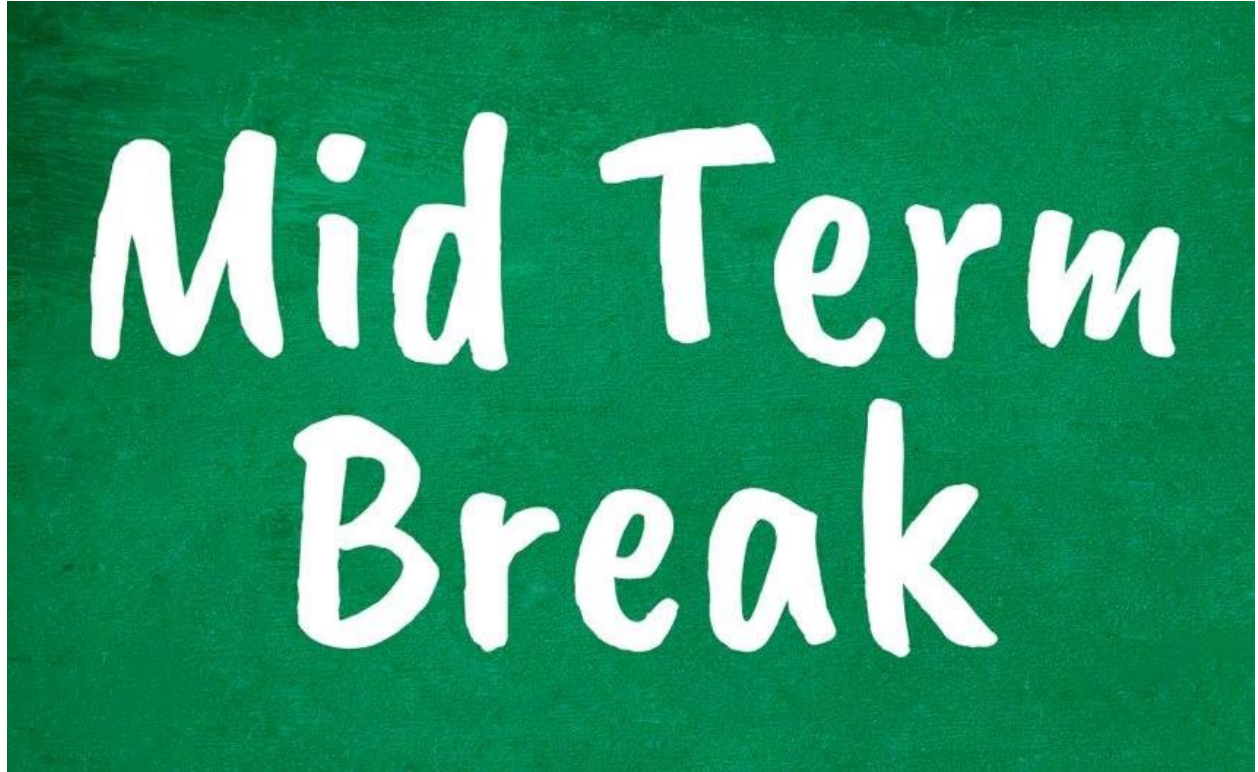
- *Reduce the spread of flu in school and at home*
 - *Protect vulnerable members of our community*
 - *Minimize disruption to learning due to illness*
-

Help Us Spread the Word

Please share this information with anyone who may be responsible for returning your child's form — including grandparents, childminders, or other caregivers.

Thank you for your cooperation in helping us keep our school community safe and healthy!

Mid - Term Break



*The school will close on Friday 24th October for all pupils. **P1 - P3 will finish at 11:45am, P4 - P7 will finish at 12 noon.** School will reopen on Monday 3rd November.*



We have a number of children who suffer from allergies, which can result in potentially serious consequences. I would therefore ask that these children are not exposed to danger and that you are mindful of any children in your child's class who may have an allergy. We continue to be a Nut Free School, please do not send in anything which contains nuts.

Parents of children with diagnosed allergies are asked to provide the school with 2 Epipens (with valid dates) and any other necessary medication as soon as possible.

Please continue to support our 'Healthy Eating Policy' and provide your child with a piece of fruit and water or milk for break.

Administraion of Medicine



Please speak to your child's teacher if you require medication administered to your child whilst at school.

Parents need to sign and complete an 'Administration of Medication' form (available from the school office) before the school will administer the medicine. All medication needs to be prescribed, should have the child's name on it and the dosage clearly labelled. Teachers will not administer medication which is not labelled as such. Please do not send in any medication with your child – it must be handed into the school office by an adult. Thank You.

Dates for Diary



Maths Week Ireland - 11th October - 19th October

Travelling Book Fair - 13th October - 17th October

Flu Vaccination - Monday 10th November

Contact Details



There are some contacts in school which do not appear to be working, perhaps due to change of number or email address. If your address, telephone number or email address has changed please inform Mrs Mason in the office to ensure we have up to date information should we have a need to contact you.
