



St. Mary's on the Hill March Information 2026

As we move further into the second term, this is always a busy and exciting period in the school year, with a wide range of events, activities, and learning opportunities taking place across St Mary's on the Hill P.S. March brings with it new energy, new experiences for our pupils, and important updates for families, so I would encourage you to take a few moments to read through this Sway carefully. Staying informed will help ensure that you are aware of everything upcoming and can support your child in making the most of the weeks ahead.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks for the ongoing support and cooperation shown to myself and all members of staff throughout this year. Over the past number of months, we have held a variety of events—concerts, workshops, curriculum information days, carol services, and many more—and it has been wonderful to see such strong attendance from our school community. Your kind words of encouragement, whether shared in person, through email, or on our social media platforms, are truly appreciated by us all. We are fortunate to have such engaged and supportive parents and carers working alongside us, ensuring that every child receives the best possible educational experience.

Should you have any questions regarding any of the information in this Sway, please do not hesitate to contact us using the school email address below:

info@stmarys.newtownabbey.ni.sch.uk

Kind regards,

Mr Matthew O'Brien

Principal

Pupils of the Month February



Congratulations to all our wonderful Pupils of the Month. They have worked so hard and we are very proud of them all.

Class	Name	Name
P16B	Gabriel McGurk	Naomh Reilly
P1MMA	Layla Russell	Oisin Mowbray
P2AW	Harlow McKenna	Amelia Buckley
P2MM	Finn O'Loughlin Maeve Gregory	Donnacha O'Hanlon
P3KR	Adam Graham	Naoise Kealey
P3EL	Finn Morelli	Chloe Copeland
P4MMc M	Darragh Coyle	Cillian Campbell
P4AOB	Oscair Milne	Mia Cassidy
P5MD	Sophia Whyte	Adam Toney
P5EC	Aidan Pollock	Chara Murphy
P6SMCC	Lily Slezak Theo Blair	Grace Downey
P6SR	Olivia McAvoy, Anna Oliver	Sienna Smyth
P7JP	Daniel McAleer Holly Rankin	Sophie McGuigan Aine McPhillips
P7JOK	Enda Welsh and Jude Mc Glone	Talya Sarikaya and Megan Reilly
SP DMcE	Isabelle Havlin	
EMcE	Daniel Boyd	

St. Mary's on the Hill P.S. Values



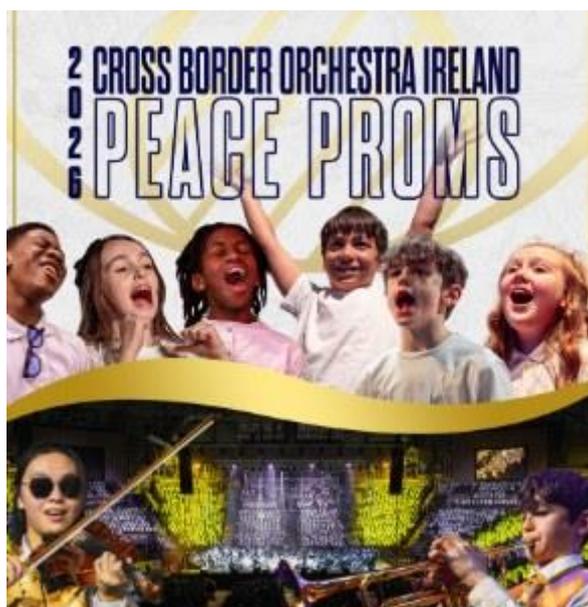
One of the things we are most proud of in St Mary's on the Hill is the wonderful **creativity** our children show every day 🧠🌟—both in their learning and in the way they approach new challenges. However, creativity is a value that can always be nurtured, encouraged, and developed. Throughout the month of **March**, we will be focusing on **Creativity** as our whole-school value 🌟.

I will be speaking to the children during our assemblies about what creativity looks like in everyday life, and staff will reinforce this message in classrooms and around the school. This will include encouraging pupils to express their ideas confidently 💡, explore different ways of thinking, take risks in their learning, and use their imagination to solve problems. We will also highlight the importance of listening to one another's ideas 👂, collaborating effectively 🤝, and appreciating the creativity found in different viewpoints.

We kindly ask parents and carers to support this focus at home by encouraging children to try new activities, share their ideas freely, persevere when things feel challenging 🏹, and take pride in their imaginative thinking.

By working together, we can help our pupils grow into confident, curious, and innovative young people who recognise the value of creativity in all aspects of life 🎨📖.

Peace Proms 2026

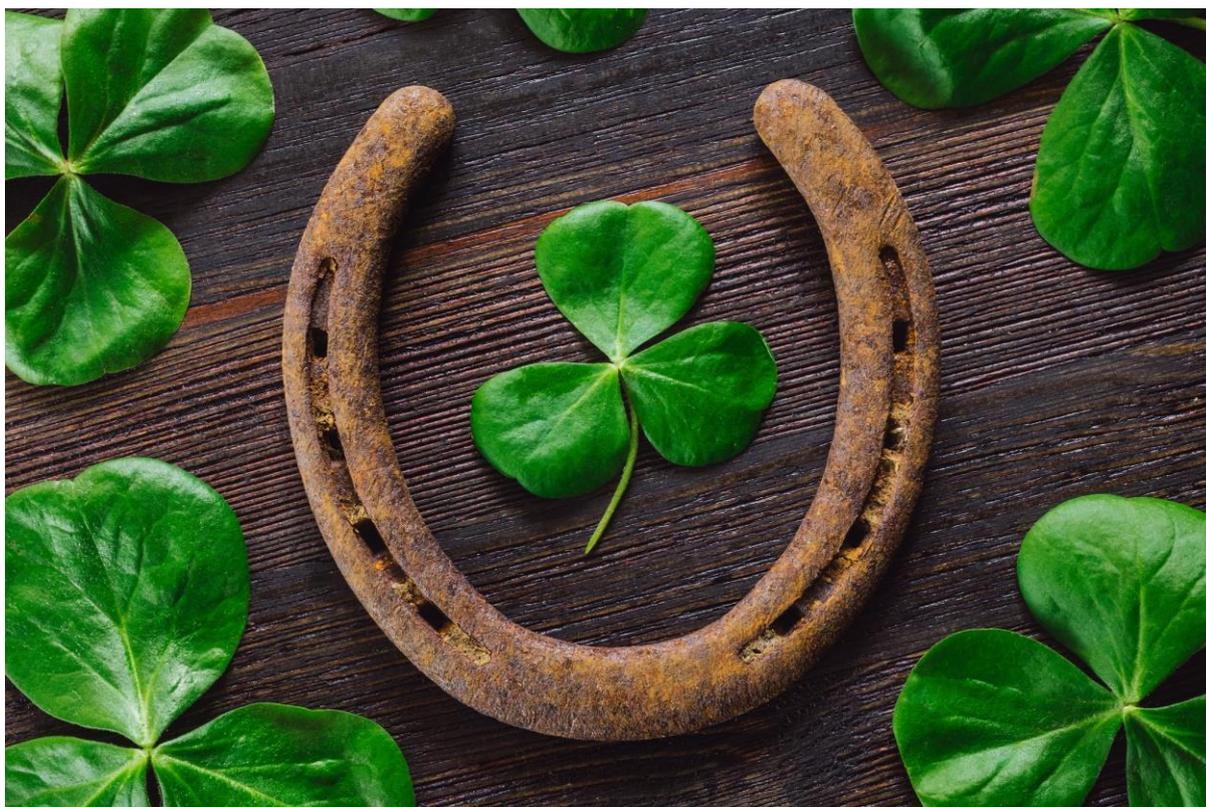


The children had a truly **wonderful time** at the Peace Proms on Sunday 1st March 🎵🌟. There was so much excitement and energy throughout the evening, and it proved to be a fantastic, fun-filled experience that the pupils will remember for a long time 🎸🎤.

A heartfelt **thank you** to all the staff and volunteers who supported the children on the night 🙌❤️—your time, care, and commitment are greatly appreciated.

We would also like to sincerely thank all our **parents and carers** for your encouragement, cooperation, and support throughout this event 🙌🌟. Your help ensured the children had such a positive and memorable experience.

Whole School Day of Culture



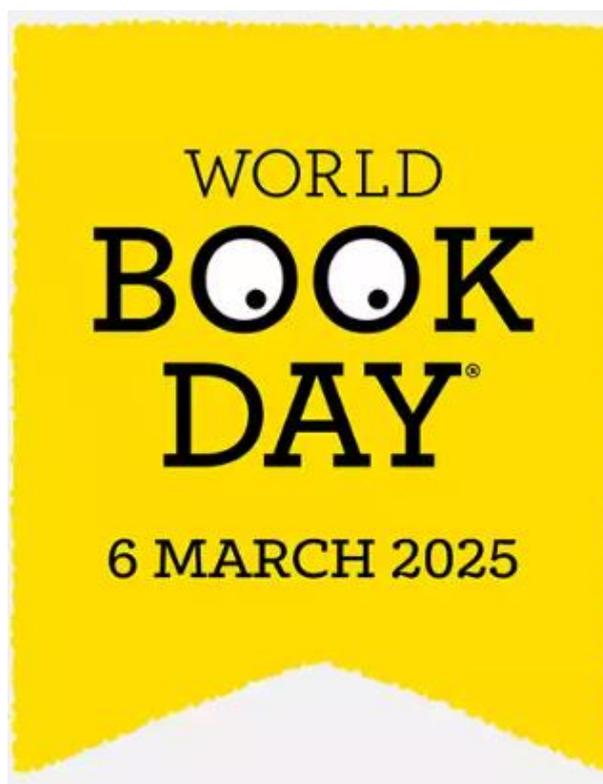
To celebrate the **Feast of St Patrick** 🍀, we will be holding a special concert in the school hall on **Friday 13th March** 🎵🎤. All pupils will take part in this joyful celebration, showcasing songs, poems, and activities linked to our patron saint and Irish heritage 🍀.

To add to the fun and festive spirit of the day, we are inviting all children to **wear something green** 🍀❤️. This could be a **hat, a badge, green baubles, socks**, or any small accessory that helps them join in the celebration.

Please note that **Football should not be worn** 🚫⚽. We are simply aiming for a touch of green to mark the occasion in a cheerful, school-appropriate way.

We look forward to a wonderful morning filled with music, celebration, and school spirit 🎵🌟.

World Book Day 2025



World Book Day will take place on **Thursday 6th March** 📖👉. To celebrate the wonderful reading achievements of the children in our school, we are inviting all pupils to **dress up as their favourite book character** on this special day 🎭👦👧🐼. This is always a highlight of the school year and a fantastic opportunity for children to bring their favourite stories to life!

Throughout the day, pupils will enjoy a range of **fun-filled activities** 🎉, including **Accelerated Reader quizzes** 📖⭐, **storytelling sessions** 📖👉, and lots of exciting opportunities to celebrate the joy of reading. World Book Day encourages imagination, creativity, and a love of books—values we are proud to nurture here at St Mary's on the Hill.

We are very much looking forward to seeing the children's wonderful costumes and celebrating their enthusiasm for reading together 📖👉

Belfast City Marathon 2026



For several years, our dedicated school staff have proudly participated in the **Belfast City Marathon** to raise funds for a range of important causes 🧑‍🎓♂️🧑‍🎓🧑‍🎓💡❤️. This year, we are excited to announce that our fundraising efforts will be directed towards supporting the **upgrading of IT equipment across the school** 🖥️📱👉.

Much of our current technology is becoming outdated, and as digital learning continues to play a vital role in education, it is essential that our pupils have access to reliable, modern devices. Funds raised this year will help us purchase **new iPads, Chromebooks, and other forms of educational technology** that will enhance teaching and learning for all pupils.

Improved IT resources will allow children to develop their digital skills, engage more creatively with the curriculum, and access learning opportunities that prepare them for the future.

We see the marathon as the perfect opportunity to unite our school community and make a meaningful difference to the learning experiences of our pupils ✨📚.

If you would like to contribute, please make a donation using the link below 🙏.

We would also be extremely grateful if you could help spread the word to friends and family by sharing this post. Your support—both in donations and encouragement—means so much to us as we embark on this fundraising journey together.

Thank you for your generosity and continued support ❤️.

Primary 7 Confirmation 2026



The children in **Primary 7** will be celebrating their **Confirmation** this month, a very special and meaningful moment in their faith journey  .

We are delighted to share that on **Wednesday 25th March 2025**, our P7 pupils will receive the Sacrament of Confirmation at **St. Bernard's Church**  . This is an important

milestone in their lives as they take on a deeper commitment to their faith and the values they have been learning throughout their time at St Mary's on the Hill.

In the lead-up to the ceremony, we will keep all our P7 boys and girls in our thoughts and prayers 🙏, asking for guidance, strength, and joy as they prepare for this significant step.

*Please note that **P7 children will leave school at 12:00pm** on the day of their confirmation 🕒, allowing them time to prepare calmly and meaningfully for this occasion.*

We look forward to joining together as a school and parish community to celebrate this beautiful sacrament with our pupils and their families ❤️🌟.

School Closures



St Patrick's Day Closures

To mark the Feast of St Patrick 🍀, the school will be closed on:

-
- *Monday 16th March 2026*
 - *Tuesday 17th March 2026*

- **Wednesday 18th March 2026**
-
-

We hope all families enjoy the extended break and have a safe and happy St Patrick's celebration  .

Easter Break

School will close for the Easter holidays on:

- **Thursday 2nd April 2026 at 12:00 noon**  
-
-

*We will reopen for **Term 3** on:*

- **Monday 13th April 2026**  
-
-

We wish all our pupils, parents, and carers a restful and enjoyable Easter break when it arrives.

Trócaire Week 2026



*As in previous years, the charity we are proud to support this term is **Trócaire** . Last year, thanks to the incredible generosity of our pupils, families, and staff, we raised a magnificent **£2,557**  . Your kindness made a real difference, and we are hopeful for another successful year of fundraising.*

*This year, our annual **Trócaire Week** will commence on **Monday 23rd March 2026** . Throughout the week, the children will take part in a variety of **challenges, activities, and fundraising events**, helping them understand the importance of compassion, global citizenship, and supporting those in need  .*

Further details will follow closer to the time, and we are very grateful for your continued support in helping our school community contribute to such a worthy cause.

School Dinners



Parents and carers can now **select and pay for school dinners for the second term** 📅 by logging in to **School Money** using your unique username and password. Dinner payments can be made **up until w/b Monday 30th March 2026** 📅.

To ensure the kitchen has accurate numbers, **your child's dinner must be ordered before midnight the day prior to when it is needed** 🕒. This allows meals to be prepared safely and efficiently each morning.

We kindly ask **all parents** to use the School Money system, as this helps us manage dinner orders more effectively and reduces administrative time 📅 ✓. If you experience any

problems logging in or making a payment, please contact the school office—staff will be happy to help ☺.

A copy of the **school dinner menu** can be found on our website 🌐, allowing you and your child to look through the choices in advance.

Thank you for your continued cooperation and support ♥.

EAT SMART WEEK

THE LUNCH BUNCH



WEEK BEGINNING	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
18th February 25th March 22nd April 20th May 18th June	Salad Fish Cucumber with Lemon Juice Steamed Broccoli & Baked Beans Chopped Potatoes & Baked Potatoes Selection of Fruit Yogurt Pots	Home-made Beef Bolognese Bacon Carrots & Green Beans Fruit Pudding & Fresh Seasonal Salad Mashed Orange Sponge with Custard	Lunch Bunch Chicken Curry & Masala Bread Golden Fries & Fresh Seasonal Salad Dessert Fruit & Omelette Focaccia Fruit & Raspberry Trickle Tarts	Road Trip with Stuffing and Fric Cakes Dessert Broccoli & Cauliflower Mashed Potatoes & Oven Baked Potatoes Chocolate and Pear Sponge Cake	Hot Dog with Tomato Ketchup Baked Potatoes & Mince Casserole Chopped Potatoes & Baked Potatoes Vanilla Ice Cream with Sweet Potatoes
22nd February 22nd March 20th April 18th May 16th June	Golden Baked Cod Steak Steamed Broccoli & Baked Beans Chopped Potatoes & Baked Potatoes Pleasant Strawberry Yogurt and Fruit Tubs	Wendy's Fish Sausages, Fresh Seasonal Salad & Cucumber Dessert Fruit & Oven Baked Potatoes Home-made Apple Sponge with Custard	Lunch Bunch Chicken Curry & Masala Bread Golden Fries & Fresh Seasonal Salad Dessert Fruit & Omelette Focaccia Fruit Fudge Cake with Strawberry Toppings	Fruit Trolley with Stuffing and Fric Cakes Mashed Potatoes & Cauliflower Oven Baked Potatoes Fruit Waffle and Mincemeat	Chopped Potatoes with Tomato Ketchup Mini Casserole with Corn & Cheddar Mashed Potatoes & Baked Potatoes Caramel Sauce with Orange Meringue
2nd March 22nd March 20th April 18th May 16th June	Golden Corned Beef Potatoes Golden Fries & Spaghetti Sauce Chopped Potatoes & Baked Potatoes Bacon Raisin Muesli	Home-made Beef Bolognese Dessert Broccoli & Fresh Seasonal Salad Fruit Pudding & Fresh Baked Potatoes Caramel Fruit Sponge Cake	Lunch Bunch Chicken Curry & Masala Bread Golden Fries & Fresh Seasonal Salad Dessert Fruit & Oven Baked Potatoes Bakery and Lemon Sponge with Custard	Fruit Steamer with Stuffing and Fric Cakes Cauliflower & Fresh Seasonal Salad Mashed Potatoes & Oven Baked Potatoes Jelly with soft Mincemeat Cheesecake	Baked Potatoes Chopped Potatoes & Mashed Potatoes Fruit Waffle topped with Meringue
9th March 6th April 4th May 2nd June	Home-made Beef Bolognese Bacon Carrots & Dressed Broccoli Fruit Pudding & Oven Baked Potatoes Mince, Muesli and Fresh Fruit	Wendy's Fish Sausages & Cucumber Chopped Potatoes & Baked Potatoes Raspberry Jelly with Two Fruits	Lunch Bunch Chicken Curry & Masala Bread Golden Fries & Fresh Seasonal Salad Dessert Fruit & Omelette Focaccia Fruit Fudge Cake with Custard	Fruit Steamer with Stuffing and Fric Cakes Dessert Broccoli with Tomato Potatoes Road Carrot & Cauliflower Mashed Potatoes & Oven Baked Potatoes Chocolate Mincemeat Muesli with Chopped Fruit	Oven Baked Chicken Casserole Golden Fries & Baked Beans Chopped Potatoes, Baked Potatoes & Fresh Seasonal Salad Home-made Pudding Sauce with Meringue

✓ MILK, WATER, BREAD AND FRESH FRUIT AVAILABLE DAILY
✓ MENU SUBJECT TO PRODUCT AVAILABILITY
✓ IF YOU REQUIRE ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON ALLERGENS OR SPECIAL DIETS PLEASE CONTACT YOUR SCHOOL

Inclement Weather



*Unfortunately, this time of year always holds the possibility of a school closure due to inclement weather. The decision to close a school is not taken lightly. As with previous years we will do all in our power to keep the school open however, I do need to consider the Health and Safety implications for pupils, parents and staff. Following a risk assessment, if a decision to close the school is made, we will inform every one of **the closures by text message** between 7.30am—8.30am. It is vitally important you inform the school office of any changes to contact numbers to ensure you receive this information. Closure information will also be displayed on the school's website.*

Facebook



*Please visit, like and share our Facebook page. It continues to be used to promote the school in the wider community. We will celebrate and mark events throughout the school year. **If you have not already done so please give our page a like.***

The school will continue to communicate and update parents via email and text. Facebook will not be used to send messages to parents and we would ask that parents do not use Facebook to contact the school.

Click on the link below and please share with anyone you think would be interested or has a connection to our school - <https://www.facebook.com/StMarysOnTheHillPS/>

Free School Meals



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 like to encourage parents who fall into this category to **please make an application** as soon as possible. Application forms may be obtained via the Education Authority website – www.eani.org.uk or alternatively by contacting Free School Meals Section on 028 2566 1350. Forms are also available from the school. Should you have any further queries regarding this, please contact the school office.*

Car Parking



CHURCH CAR PARK: I would like to gently remind everyone of the difficulties and dangers around drop-off and collection of your child/ren. I am asking that all parents exercise extreme caution. To alleviate the difficulty of congestion we are asking all parents to make a **LEFT TURN** when exiting the car park. **Please use the designated parking spaces or drop off zone.**

WAITING AT THE GATE: Thank you all for your support and cooperation in the mornings whilst leaving your children to school. **We would ask parents not to wait at the gate once**

they have left their child to school. By leaving your child off and moving off-site you are freeing up limited parking spaces. It can be difficult for children to enter through the gate when parents are gathered there. As the gate is in close proximity to the entrance of the car park we want to make every effort to ensure no accidents occur. We would appreciate your cooperation in this matter as the safety of our children is our primary concern. Please pass this information on to anyone who will be responsible for leaving or collecting your child.

Allergy Awareness

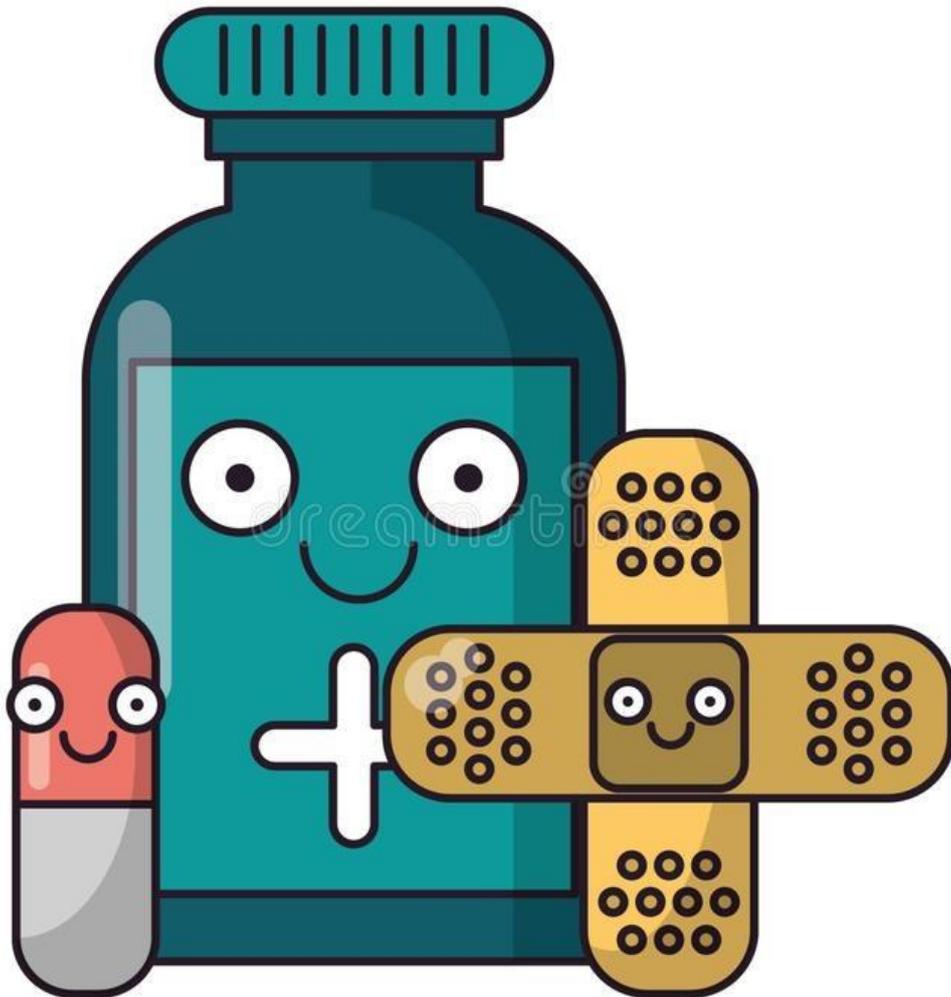


We have a number of children who suffer from allergies, which can result in potentially serious consequences. I would therefore ask that these children are not exposed to danger and that you are mindful of any children in your child's class who may have an allergy. We continue to be a Nut Free School,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

Administration of Medicine



Please visit the school office if your child requires medication to be administered 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 should have the child's name on it and the dosage clearly labelled. Please do not send any medication with your child – it must be handed into the school office by an adult. Thank You.

Contact Details



There are some contacts in school which do not appear to be working, perhaps due to a 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.
