



Dear Parents

In April/May last year, parents took time to complete a questionnaire in relation to a number of important issues in St Bride's, for example pastoral care, teaching and learning and general school matters. The feedback was very positive in many areas. Parents commented positively on the high standards of teaching and learning, high levels of achievement, aspects of Pastoral Care and the dedication of staff. There were also some areas highlighted that parents felt could be further developed, for example, better communication between school and home, more after school clubs, introduction of after school care and more opportunities for children to be involved in sports/physical activities.

Parents' views were shared with the staff and the Board of Governors and aspects for further development have been incorporated into the new **School Development Plan**. The school will continue to address areas raised by staff and parents as best we can, in a measured way and I thank parents for their interest and the contributions made.

**Aspects that are being addressed to date include:**

- After School Care has been launched
- A greater variety of after school clubs is being offered to different year groups
- Some KS2 pupils are taking part in 'Walk a Mile a Day' health initiative
- Pupils throughout the school were encouraged to take part in the health initiative 'Beat the Street'
- Resources and equipment have been provided for outdoor play at Lunch-Time
- Better communication is being developed through Curriculum Newsletters twice a term for each year group, the use of school text service for reminders or messages for particular classes/year groups. The web site is constantly being up dated with information for parents and show cases pupils' activities and learning. The school now has a Twitter account @StBridesPS1 (details below)
- Parents have been invited to attend class assemblies (each class will invite parents to one of their assemblies this year)

**Parent Teacher** meetings will take place next Monday 14th November. Details have been sent home with your child, so check the school bags! Teachers have liaised with each other to try to facilitate families with two or more siblings, so it may be difficult to rearrange times, especially in the light of industrial action by some teacher unions.

**After School Care** began on Monday, 7th November. The club will be located in the Derryvolgie dining hall and leaders will be using the back playground and play park for outdoor activities. For health and safety reasons and in line with safeguarding procedures, parents are asked not to wait in the back playground or garden area after the 2.00 and 3.00 pick-up times.

There are a number of places still available and application forms will be available from the Derryvolgie Office on Wednesday, 16th November should you wish to apply for a place for December onwards. Completed forms can be returned to Miss Joyce's office in the Ashleigh site. I hope parents will find this new venture helpful. I know the children will enjoy the activities being offered. It is important that children are picked up promptly at 4.00 in order for the after school care to run smoothly. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

**Twitter Account** Follow us on @StBridesPS1 to keep up to date with events and celebrations in school. You will need to create your own Twitter account to be able to follow St Bride's, it is quite a simple process.

**Curriculum Newsletters** for each Year Group have been sent home with your child. These newsletters give a brief overview of the curriculum areas and topics to be covered over the next half term, up to Christmas. The information provided should help to generate discussion about what is being taught in school and offers tips for parents to help support your child's learning.

**Anti-Bullying Week** begins on Monday 14th November. Children will take part in special lessons and Assemblies that will raise awareness of and deal with issues relating to bullying and bullying behaviour. The Board of Governors have recently adopted our revised Pastoral Care and Positive Behaviour Policy which includes the Anti-Bullying Policy. It is available to view or download from the school website or a hard copy will be made available from the office if requested by a parent.

### Parents' 'Whatsapp' Groups

I am aware that parents in a growing number of classes have organised a 'WhatsApp' group messaging service and I know the PTA have actively promoted this as a means of getting information to parents in a simple but effortless way. These groups are also very useful for parents, for example, to ask for help with pick-ups if running late to the school.

A small number of parents have raised concerns with me about the nature of some of the content in these group messages. I feel it is necessary to draw your attention to the importance of using this service for the purpose intended, passing on messages or organising pick-ups/play dates, checking if homework has been set. I would like to remind parents, if you have a concern about your child, *of any nature*, please speak directly to the class teacher or if more appropriate, arrange a meeting with either of the Vice Principals, (Miss Joyce or Mrs Granleese), with the Foundation/Key Stage 1 coordinator (Mrs O'Prey) or speak to Mrs Quinn.

### PTA

I would like to thank the members of the PTA for their commitment and time given to running fundraising events. Running two Halloween events proved to be very successful and as two venues were used a greater number of children were able to take part in the fun. The Christmas Fair is a key event in the year of the school and enjoyed by many. It will be held on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> November. Details of how you can support this event will be sent home shortly. If you can spare a couple of hours on an evening each month to join the committee or are able to volunteer to help at events, please leave your details with Jackie or Christina at the school office or e mail [stbridespta@gmail.com](mailto:stbridespta@gmail.com)

### Reminder of dates for upcoming events:

Sunday 27th November	PTA Christmas Fair
Thursday 1 <sup>st</sup> December	Open Day for Nursery & Year 1 @ 2.30pm (admissions September, 2017)
Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup> December	Year 1 Christmas Concert 1.15pm
<b>Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>School is closed for all pupils</b>
Friday 9 <sup>th</sup> December	Year 2 Christmas Concert 1.15pm
Tuesday 13 <sup>th</sup> December	Year 3 Christmas Concert 1.15pm
Friday 16 <sup>th</sup> December	Carol Service St Brigid's Church 11.00am
Monday 19 <sup>th</sup> December	Orchestral Recital 2.15pm
<b>Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> December</b>	<b>No school dinners will be served</b>
<b>Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> December</b>	<b>School will close at 12.00</b>

Please note: Year 4 children are not performing a Christmas Concert this year, as they will be performing at a St Patrick's Day concert instead. (More details to follow later)

### Union Action by Teaching Unions

To date I have not been informed of Strike Action by staff, despite it being erroneously reported in the Belfast Telegraph. The only industrial action currently affecting some of our staff is the directive to hold only one formal Parent Teaching Meeting this year. I will keep you informed if there are further developments.

Mary Rose Quinn