



St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, Dipton

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Executive Headteacher: Mrs J Burgess Head of School: Mrs L Gardner
We follow in Christ's footsteps

Friday 8th October

Dear Families



I hope you have all had a lovely holiday and that you are all feeling refreshed and ready to go. It is wonderful to see all our pupils and staff back, enjoying a sunny start to the new school year!

Pupils, you look extremely smart in school uniform. Let's keep that up.

We are sure the start to the new term has been particularly exciting, or maybe a little nerve-racking, for our newest pupils (and their parents) starting Reception. We have been delighted with the way our youngest pupils have settled so far and we are confident all new children and their families will quickly get to grips with school routines.

Miss Spinks

Speaking of new starters, we are delighted to welcome Miss Ellie Spinks to our team. Miss Spinks has settled in immediately and we are sure she will be an asset to St Patrick's.

School Diary of Events/After School Clubs

Currently, we are putting together the school diary of events for the year. We appreciate the further you know the 'big' events, in advance, the better. We are also looking at after school clubs for the autumn term. Again, further information will be sent out as soon as they are finalised in the next few weeks.

Some General Reminders

Drop off

Thank you, to everyone for embracing our new opening time of 8.45 a.m. We no longer have a soft start, where pupils and parents had a ten-minute window to enter into school. Reverting to lining up, therefore, seemed the best way forward to ensure the safety of our pupils. As it is a little busy for our Reception

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pupils, we ask that parents watch older siblings into school (if applicable) before walking our Reception children to the Reception yard for 8.50am. Staff will be waiting to welcome children. Parents will also get the chance to pass on a quick message to staff at this 'handover' point. We want the start of each day to be as calm and positive as possible. Vehicles are not allowed on site at the start/end of the school day. Pupils know they are not allowed on the climbing equipment, or in the bike shelter except to drop off bikes/scooters. Please remind your child of this before entering the yard.

Earrings - For health and safety reasons, earrings are not permitted in school. I realise some children will have had ears pierced over the summer holiday but it is now 7 weeks since term ended last academic year and that should have provided sufficient time for earrings to now be removed.

School bags – Space is limited in classrooms so please do not send pupils with oversized bags - use the recommended bags only. We have spares in school if you need help with this.

Water bottles – We ask that each child brings a clearly labelled water bottle each day. Please do not put juice in your child's water bottle. If pupils have packed lunch, it would be much easier for them if they have a water bottle in packed lunch boxes and a separate water bottle (labelled) for the classroom.

Hair dye – Please do not send children to school with dyed hair/excessively shaved or any form of 'patterned' hairstyles. This has always been the expectations at St Patrick's.

Open Day for Reception 2024

We have organised 2 'open-day' sessions for parents of pupils starting school in Reception 2024. These informal sessions will be held on **Monday 25th September at 9.30 – 10.30 a.m.** and **1.15-2.15 p.m.** During the sessions, you will have the opportunity to meet the class teachers, view our wonderful reception class and outdoor area and have a tour of the school. You will also have the opportunity to meet some of our Y6 pupils who will tell you about their experiences of St. Patrick's. Please spread the word! Contact school to let us know if you wish to attend. If these dates are not convenient, please ring the school office and we will see if we are able to accommodate another time. We enjoy the chance to let people see our school.

Safeguarding/Online Safety

We will give safeguarding and online safety updates regularly throughout the year. Please alert us to any concerns you may have. It is better for us to know if something has happened which has worried you, so we can address issues with pupils and offer support in an appropriate manner.

This academic year, we hope to explore a different general safety theme each month so that our pupils understand how to keep themselves safe and how to make sensible choices. We will start with online safety this month.

Year 5 Youth Village Trip

Our Year 5 children are having a great start to their year. No sooner have they returned to school, they are preparing for a residential visit to the Youth Village next week. Brilliant! A big thank you, in advance to Mrs Oswald, Mrs Drummond and Mrs McGrady for giving your time so freely so that children can have such a great experience. I will also be joining the group overnight.

School Improvement Priorities

This year brings us many opportunities for all members of our school to grow and learn together. We are challenged to have the highest expectations in all we do. Every school produces its own version of a school

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improvement plan which list priorities for development. We have wasted no time at all and we have already met as a staff to agree what we will pay particular attention to this year. We will be adding this information to the school website very shortly and will let you know when the information is ready to view.

Behaviour Curriculum

At St. Patrick's, we pride ourselves on the excellent behaviour of our pupils and have high expectations of the way in which children conduct themselves. This is so every pupil has the most positive experiences possible, both inside and outside the classroom. With this in mind, we are making some minor changes to the way in which we promote good behaviour and this year, we are introducing a behaviour curriculum.

Our school mission statement remains: We follow in Christ's footsteps

This will be enhanced with the principles of:

Be respectful;

Be responsible;

Be ready to learn.

These '3 Rs' encompass all elements of school life and offer a simple, easy reference for the teaching of good behaviour.

The behaviour curriculum will be taught alongside other subjects at the start of the school year, in order to familiarise children with behaviour expectations. It will then be frequently revised and revisited.

The teaching of behaviour principles forms a key part of school life. Our role is to educate and prepare children for the next stage in their lives – be that the next stage of their education, or for their roles as members of society. Learning to get along with others and to follow rules and expectations are as much a part of this process as learning to read and to use number. As with all curriculum subjects, we understand that some children will make mistakes. This is to be expected and forms a vital part of the way that children learn. In maths, for example, if a child makes a mistake with calculating, the mistake will be pointed out and the child will be shown how to correct it, practising this if necessary, perhaps with some support from home.

On occasions, you may be contacted about your child's behaviour. In the coming months, once the new system is embedded, we will begin to send notifications to parents to inform them of any low-level behaviour incidents. If this is the case, we ask that you first discuss this behaviour with your child and support them with behaviour choices, referring to our three key behaviour principles. As with all areas of learning in school, parental support is paramount and key to achieving the best outcomes for children.

Fr Damian

We have said a fond farewell to Fr Damian this weekend as he has been asked by our diocese to lead a new ministry in West Denton. We thank him for his time and energy that he gave to our school. He will be greatly missed and we wish him well as he begins his new chapter.

Fr. Shaun Purdy will be joining us from Ashington. We have heard wonderful things about him, and we look forward to giving him a warm welcome.

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As you will expect with these changes, we are yet to confirm some of our Mass dates as well as our First Holy Communion programme. As soon as Fr Shaun is settled, we will let you know of further dates in our Catholic calendar. We'll just give him time to unpack first!

Volunteers

Do you have any spare time that you could give to St Patrick's? If so, please give Mrs Clarke or Mrs Smith in our school office a call. We are looking for volunteers to read with our pupils. Staff and pupils would very much appreciate this and I think this is something many parents/carers/grandparents would enjoy, too. We would need to carry out a range of safeguarding checks including a DBS clearing check, but we would work with you to complete relevant documentation. Miss Parry, who is our reading lead, would also have a chat with you about our reading approach. Luckily, we have benefited from a number of volunteers in the past but, understandably, as pupils move on, so do parent/carer helpers.

Great North Run

Good luck to everyone taking part, or supporting in events, this weekend. Enjoy it. You're doing an amazing thing! Mrs Gardner will be taking part in the Junior Great North Run (not quite as far!) and will keep a look out for any of our pupils who are joining in. You can wear your medal with pride on Monday – we would love to see it.

And finally....Good luck to Year 7

Last, but certainly not least, we wish all the Year 7 pupils well as they embark on their next adventure.

I know I speak on behalf of all members of staff when I say we are all very excited to get stuck in and help our pupils learn and progress. If you have any queries/concerns regarding any information in this letter please phone the school office or email: stpd@stpd.bwcet.com

Also, if you have any great ideas for us to explore within our school community, please let us know.

Please remember, it is always better to deal directly with school to have queries/concerns answered, rather than rely on information which may filter through WhatsApp groups etc. The school office can always provide the most accurate information. After checking with your child (especially with our older pupils), speaking to a member of the school office team should always be the first point of contact.

Thank you, for taking the time to read what has turned out to be a rather lengthy first letter. Apologies – although we do feel it is important to keep parents/carers well informed. When home and school work together, pupils will have the best chance of success.

We will resume our weekly newsletter from next week.

Kind regards

Mrs Burgess
Executive Headteacher

Mrs Gardner
Head of School

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