



Newsletter

2nd October 2020



Pupil of the Week

Congratulations to all our brilliant Pupils of the Week – Alex Mitchell P1S, Laylah Stewart P1H, Emmie Millar P2K, Charley Finlay P3L, Riley McNamee P4K, Isla Finlay P5/6C and Lucy Jo Millar P7C.

Pupils achieve this award for good behaviour, great effort or good work.

Mathletics



Congratulations to Jodie McGuigan and Isabella Roche, both P6C who have achieved Mathletics

GOLD certificate. Well done girls.

Mathletics was a huge support to pupils, their parents and children during lockdown. A benefit of lockdown was that many parents had time, with no other homework being sent home daily, engaged with this online programme more than before.

Now that schools are re-opened please continue to encourage your child to use this excellent resource. Our Extended Schools Funds pay for it.

Mr Tom Bradley — Chairman of the Board of Governors

Mr Bradley offered his resignation as Chair of the Board of Governors at Tuesday night's meeting. He has taken this decision due to his relocation to Moira in Co. Down. Despite the distance from Sion Mills Mr Bradley has continued to carry out his duties as Chair of the Board of Governors to an excellent degree since February 2020. During lockdown he contacted the staff through me at least every week and thanks to technology we were able to continue to have as many Board of Governor meetings as was necessary following the arrival of the C-19 pandemic, to discuss and make decisions for the school community.

Mr Bradley has served on the Board of Governors of Sion Mills Primary School for many years. This is a voluntary position but carries much responsibility. His wise judgement and thoughtful and informed opinions were very much appreciated by myself and my predecessor Mrs Amor. As Chair of Governors, since the retirement of Mr Friar, Mr Bradley has been an exemplary support to the staff of our school. We will miss his input at meetings and other school events but everyone wishes him and his family many years of health and happiness in Moira.

Until a new Chair of Governors is elected Mrs Vicky Patterson, as Vice-Chair will assume the duties of Chair of Governors.

Autumn Term – Dates for your Diary

Hallowe'en Break	Monday 26 th October – Tuesday 3 rd November (inclusive)
Influenza Vaccinations	Thursday 12 th November (consent letters will be sent out as usual)

Covid-19

URGENT Communication to school

We have purchased a mobile phone for the school that parents or carers may use to inform us of any Covid related issue that would concern the school community, **outside of school hours and including the weekends.**

The number is **079 0856 4018**. ***This number will only receive texts or voicemails.*** A member of staff will contact you as soon as possible following receipt of the information.

It has become obvious from other schools over the past few weeks that Covid-19 related issues can arise very suddenly in school. Classes could be told to self-isolate at very short notice by text, even first thing in the morning! I am asking each family to have a plan in place should this unfortunate event arise.

Free School Meals

It is not too late to apply for Free School Meals if you think you might be eligible. Applications are made online at:

<https://www.eani.org.uk/financial-help/free-school-meals-school-uniform-allowance>

If you need help to access this site, call at the office where we will be happy to help you. Uptake of these places are important to all schools as it is one of the factors that increases the school's budget. Your child will still be able to choose to take school dinner or not. The better the school budget the more can be made available to your child and others.



Photographic Permission and Data Collection Forms

If you have not already returned your child/ren's forms to school, please return as soon as possible.



Healthy Breaks

We continue to operate a Healthy Breaks policy. The vast majority of children bring **healthy breaks such as fruit/vegetable portions, sandwiches with cheese or simply butter, milk or water.** Thank you.



Milk Money

Milk money for October is now due. Please send £3.00 in to your child's class teacher as soon as possible.

Boxes of Tissues

Children are being very careful with the 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it.' activity We would appreciate it if each family could provide one box of tissues please.

First Holy Communion

Our children who had expected to make their First Holy Communion in May 2020 will receive the sacrament for the first time on Saturday 3rd October. All sixteen boys and girls and their parents have been looking forward to this day for a long time, so we wish everyone a happy and holy day, **keeping safe**.

We appreciate the patience and flexibility everyone has shown with waiting and dates changing suddenly. We are hoping the children can send in some photographs using Seesaw for their class to have an assembly on Monday. We plan to have a little celebration in school for the children in their class bubble to mark the occasion, as we cannot have whole school assemblies at the moment.



SeeSaw

Your child should have brought home information on how to download the SeeSaw app onto any device – mobile phone, I pad, tablet or laptop. This app is a tool teaching staff will be and many are already using to communicate with parents and their children.

Staff are currently upskilling themselves, the pupils and parents in its use. This app will be used instead of private Facebook pages in the event of another lockdown or a quarantining situation.

If you have any worries or difficulty downloading, please contact your child's teacher through the office. We are very keen to have online learning established.

Procedures for Parents or Carers who wish to raise a Concern

As a school, we pride ourselves on having a friendly, supportive approach to parent communication. You are encouraged to talk to us about your child's progress, achievements or indeed any concerns you may have. We love sharing and celebrating your child's successes inside and outside of school. We also want to know if there are any other issues which may be affecting them here at school. If an incident has happened in school that we are unaware of or an issue is beginning to arise, please contact us so we can deal with it effectively. We want to keep these lines of communication open. In order for our policy to work effectively, please bear in mind the procedure.

I need to talk to someone - I have a concern



I can talk to the class teacher

Please call to make an appointment (Due to Covid-19 this will probably be a telephone conversation)



If I am still concerned I can talk to the Principal, **Mrs McNelis**

Please call to make an appointment (Due to Covid-19 this will probably be a telephone conversation)



**If the concern cannot be resolved,
Stage 1 of Complaints Policy may be enacted:**

I can write to the
Principal, **Mrs McNelis**



**If the concern cannot be resolved,
Stage 2 of Complaints Policy may be enacted:**

I can write to the
Vice-Chairman of the Board of Governors, **Mrs Vicky Patterson**



If I am still concerned, I can contact the
NI Public Services Ombudsman
Tel: 0800 343 424

Sion Mills Primary School

Safeguarding & Child Protection Leaders

(All staff have training in Safeguarding & Child Protection)

Mrs Wendy Kee Vice-principal & Designated Teacher Safeguarding & Child Protection lead for SMPS	Mrs Oonagh McNelis Principal & Deputy Designated Officer
Mrs Grainne McAleer Deputy Designated Teacher	Miss Catherine McGeady Deputy Designated Teacher
Mrs Vicky Patterson Vice-chair of Board of Governors	Mrs Carmel Cronin Safeguarding & Child Protection Governor