



# Newsletter

## 19th October 2020



Autumn Term – Dates for your Diary	
Hallowe'en Break	Monday 19 <sup>th</sup> October – Friday 30 <sup>th</sup> October <i>Please note the change of dates.</i> <b>School reopens Monday 2nd November</b>
Influenza Vaccinations	Thursday 12 <sup>th</sup> November



Congratulations to our September Handwriters of the Month.

Niamh Mullen P1S, Mason Hetherington P1H, Evie Sheen P2, Aoife McGrinder P3L, Holly Moore P4 and Auguste Sileryte P5/6C, Abbie O'Meara P5/P6McG and Olivia Laughlin P7C

### Extended Hallowe'en Half-term Break

On Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> October, the NI Executive announced that schools would close from Monday 19<sup>th</sup> October. This was unexpected as the Minister had continually said schools would remain open. It was yesterday afternoon before we were clear about the details of this closure. We now have the details:

Education settings will be closed to all pupils during these two weeks including for vulnerable children and children of key workers. Schools and other settings will reopen on Monday, 2 November;

As this is an extension of the half-term break, it is not intended to be used for remote learning. This is a holiday; there will be NO remote learning;

During the week beginning 19 October direct payments will be made to pupils in receipt of Free School Meals.

### First Holy Communion

Congratulations to our Primary 5 girls and boys who celebrated their First Holy Communion on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> October. They were a real credit to their families and their school, as they all played their part in the ceremony with confidence and reverence despite it being taken forward by two weeks unexpectedly. We had a lovely party in school on Monday, each P5 group shared their cake with their class bubble. The event created some good discussions around how communion is celebrated in the different Christian denominations



Best wishes Kacey, Joe, Mara, Blake, Oonagh, Ryan, Caitlin, Orrin, Amirah, Riley P, Zara, Harley and missing from photograph – Riley C, Shay, Bentley and Tommie-Leigh.



## First Half Term

As a school community we can be extremely proud that we have all worked together to keep our school and classes open.

### You the parents have been amazingly supportive by:

- ♦ Leaving your children at their respective gate in the morning and moving off quickly, keeping each other (the adults) safe;
- ♦ Informing us quickly of any Covid related incident that affect your family and taking the required action;
- ♦ Contacting us for advice if unsure;
- ♦ Helping us get organised with Seesaw to support online learning;
- ♦ Trusting your child/ren into our care.



### Your children have been SUPERB by:

- ♦ Adapting to the morning, during the day and evening procedures brilliantly;
- ♦ Lining up and washing their hands with good humour and respect for each other;
- ♦ Sticking faithfully to their class bubble with no complaints;
- ♦ Displaying wonderful patience and acceptance of the things they can no longer do or have to wait to be able to use, e.g. the outside play equipment;
- ♦ Having a go with Seesaw.



### Staff have also worked hard to:

- ♦ Reassure their pupils that they are safe and their learning will continue from where they are at;
- ♦ Explain and assist children in understanding why we now do the 'Keep Safe' practices;
- ♦ Adapt how we used to work in our classrooms to a different style;
- ♦ Get familiar with Seesaw, posting work online and responding to their pupils;
- ♦ Get used to wearing the recommended PPE and social distancing as much as possible.

This is a brief summary of the many things that are going on and demonstrate the fantastic teamwork of the Sion Mills Primary School Community. Everyone's co-operation has been phenomenal.

**We are looking forward to continuing what is in place after the Hallowe'en break.**

## Re-opening of Schools - Pupils' Feelings

A short survey was carried out with the children yesterday, to find out their thoughts on the new routines in place. A quick analysis shows that the vast majority are happy back at school and feel safe. They are hugely accepting of our new routines and understand why we are doing them. Like the staff they can see that some things are better now, e.g. playtimes, with classes having fun together rather than all mixed together. They do miss having the whole playground and a bigger choice at dinner. Some of them miss assembly but most like going directly to their classroom.

After school clubs are hugely missed as well as looking forward to all the events the PTFA helped us organise – Hallowe'en parties, Sport's Day (they are thinking ahead!!) etc. Most P7s mentioned their end of Primary School Residential Trip, even though this has not been talked about in class.

Many of the older children really do not want another school closure. *It is important that we all keep doing all we can to prevent this in school and outside of school.* Staff DO NOT want this either and the NI Executive are quite determined that schools will stay open unless public health determines otherwise.

Some mentioned they are worried about the virus and catching it. We will continue to reassure them in school, of the key things we can do to prevent it – **social distancing, hand washing and Catch it, Bin it, Kill it.**

## Environmental Award

During the lockdown period from March- June 2020, Casey and Sean Mc Anenny participated in the John Muir Award. This is an environmental award scheme that allowed them to explore the local village and get involved in lots of conservation activities. They created a fantastic powerpoint, detailing their journey through the award and we hope to show this when it is safe for our Eco assemblies to resume. The siblings received an eco goodie bag today in recognition of their achievement.



The John Muir Award is an environmental award scheme focused on wild places.

It encourages people of all backgrounds to connect with, enjoy, and care for wild places.

<https://www.johnmuirtrust.org>



## Accelerated Reading

As the children settle back into a school routine, they have really embraced the Accelerated Reading programme with great enthusiasm. From Years 4 – 7 they have read 1,067 books and a whopping total of 4,533,021 words, since September. This is really amazing and it most definitely helps their reading growth. Please continue to promote reading with your child at home. CONGRATULATIONS to Conn Kelly P6McG. He is now a ½ word millionaire.

## Mathletics

Congratulations to our **GOLD** achievers: during July/August: Noah Spratt and AJ Laughlin, both P2K; September: Emma McGillion P7C; October: Tammy Gibson P3L, Tyler Campbell P5C, Ryan Speak P5C, Robert Williamson P6C, Rebecca McKane P5McG, Lucas Williamson, Sophie McNulty, Olivia Laughlin and Paige McCartney from P7C. Well done everyone.



Due to the restrictions on access to cinemas we have changed our monthly prizes to a goodie box. The winners can choose their prize from a variety of items.

Winners for Sept/Oct are: Tyrion McColgan P1H, Meera Catterson P1S, Lorchan Reilly P2K, Rionnah Deazley P3L/McA, Gracey Hamilton P4K, Oonagh McKay P6C, Emily McClintock P6McG and Leah Barr P7C.



### Is Covid- 19 making you worried or sad?

Nervous about being back at school?  
Are your family finding it tough?  
Are you anxious for yourself and loved ones?  
**Barnardo's NI See, Hear, Respond can help you.**  
For more information go to  
<https://www.barnardos.org.uk/northern-ireland-see-hear-respond> or call 0800 157 7015  
12-7pm, Mon - Fri

### Is Covid-19 hurting your family?

Struggling to cope?  
Feeling isolated?  
Worried for your children?  
**Barnardo's NI See, Hear, Respond is here to help.**  
You can self-refer online at  
<https://www.barnardos.org.uk/northern-ireland-see-hear-respond>  
Or call 0800 157 7015 12-7pm Mon - Fri



Pupils are awarded Pupil of the Week for effort with their work, 'Having a Go', positive attitude to work or life in general, good behaviour or kindness to others

	5 <sup>th</sup> October	12 <sup>th</sup> October
P1S	Mia Millar	Meera Catterson
P1H	Connie Hegarty	Tiernan Moore
P2	Toni O'Brien	Millie Devlin
P3	Charley Finaly	Rionnah Deazley
P4	Kamile Elijosuite	Cara Brown
P5/6C	Sienna O'Loughlin	Naomi Aiken
P5/6McG	Emily McClintock	Max Mitchell
P7	Rhys Brolly Neeson	Colby Patterson