



Prospectus



St.Mary's Primary School
5 Cavanakeeran Road Pomeroy Co Tyrone BT702RD
Tel: 028 8775 8541

Principal's Welcome

Dear Parents,

May I take this opportunity of welcoming your child to St Mary's Primary School.

This prospectus has been designed to provide some of the information you may need. We want you to be fully informed about life in our school.

St Mary's Primary School is a Catholic co-educational School with a Catholic ethos under the Trusteeship of St. Patrick's Educational Trust, Archdiocese of Armagh. The school provides a faith-based education centred on gospel values of love, respect, justice, compassion and hope. We warmly welcome learners from the Catholic tradition, other Christian traditions and non-Christian traditions as well as those who do not identify as having any religious faith.

As a Primary School with a distinctly Catholic ethos, we cater for children of compulsory school age. In keeping with this ethos the staff are dedicated to the provision of a caring and sympathetic environment where children will benefit from the total experiences on offer. Nurture is prevalent throughout the whole school and the Rainbow Room (Nurture Room) is at the heart of our ethos – 'Today's Child, Tomorrow's Future.'

We in St Mary's Primary School work in partnership with the home and the whole community to help the children in our care. As a Catholic school our main aim is to establish and foster Christian values for life, to do this it is essential that we develop this partnership with parents. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum in a caring and secure environment that will enable our children to grow, to learn, develop lifelong skills and to flourish socially, emotionally and academically.

Parents are always encouraged to take a deep interest in the progress of their children and to work with school staff for the benefit of all pupils. With both the home and school working in harmony, your child should benefit to the full.

If you have any further questions, do not hesitate in contacting me. You will receive a warm welcome when visiting our school.

Mrs Christina Hinfey
Acting Principal

Vision Statement

St Mary's Primary School is a Catholic Maintained school serving the parish of Pomeroy. We are committed to the aims of Catholic education enabling children to fulfil their potential for Christian, academic and personal development.

We have a caring school where everyone is valued and respected, and where the whole school community shares a common goal; to do the very best for all the children in our care. We encourage everyone to be part of our school. Our success depends on co-

operation between pupils, staff, parents, Governors and the wider parish community.

Together, inspired by our faith in Christ, we will provide a happy secure and stimulating learning environment where all our children will achieve their full potential socially, emotionally and academically and will be well equipped to meet the challenges and opportunities of later life.



Aims for Pupils

St Mary's Primary School promotes high achievement and learning for life by working with children to:

- Develop enquiring minds and a spirit of curiosity.
- Become highly motivated independent learners.
- Have high self esteem – respecting themselves, others and the environment.
- Be able to work independently and co-operatively.
- Achieve high standards in all areas of the curriculum.
- Develop high levels of ICT skills.
- Take responsibility for their own learning as they grow into reliable, independent and positive citizens.

Mission Statement

We believe each child will succeed through experiencing quality in:

- An ethos of fairness, tolerance, compassion and forgiveness.
- A broad, balanced and challenging curriculum.
- An enriching programme of extra-curricular activities.
- A stimulating learning environment.
- The adoption of the Principles of Nurture throughout the whole school.
- A rich, varied and up to date range of learning resources.
- Innovative teaching using a range of strategies and approaches.
- A distinctive ethos of support and encouragement to succeed.
- Positive and supportive pastoral systems.
- Learning partnerships between home, school and the wider community.

About our school

The school is set in extensive, well maintained grounds in the village of Pomeroy within walking distance from Church of the Assumption, Pomeroy.

The present building has 7 permanent classrooms, a fully resourced IT suite, a Literacy centre, The Rainbow Room, additional office spaces, a large hall, its own school meals kitchen, outdoor play areas to include specific outdoor play learning areas, garden, playground, handball alley and 4g pitch.

The teaching staff, including a principal and 7 full time teachers, work closely with the classroom assistants and ancillary staff. Together they all provide a happy and secure learning environment in which all children can reach their full potential and have the opportunity to succeed.



Admission

Prospective pupils and their parents are most welcome to visit the school at any time by appointment. Children who are admitted to Primary One in St. Mary's Primary School embark on a programme of induction commencing in June when parents and their child are invited to meet the Primary One teacher. Parents receive a formal written/online invitation to this meeting.

New pupils transferring to the school in Primary 2 – Primary 7 are welcomed by the principal and class teacher in advance of their enrolment in school.

We are delighted to meet prospective parents and pupils, make arrangements to show them around the school and provide information about the life of our school. Our whole school community contribute to welcoming and supporting new arrivals and their families, and all staff work closely to identify needs of new pupils and track and monitor early progress.

As soon as your child enters our school we liaise closely with parents to form supportive links for the child and build firm foundations for their future learning.

Board of Governors

Chairman of the Board of Governors:

Fr David Moore

Representatives of the Trustees:

Mrs Mary Harte
Mr Colm Rafferty

Representatives of the EA:

Mrs Fionnuala Quinn
Mr Danny Gray

Representative of DENI:

Mr Cathal Mallaghan

Teachers' Representative:

Mrs Ursula Daly (**Acting Vice-Principal**)

Parents' Representative:

Mrs Rosa Quinn

Principal:

Mrs Christina Hinfey (**Acting Principal**)

Staff

The school currently caters for 179 pupils between the ages of 4 and 11 and has a teaching staff of 8 who are employed by the Council for Catholic Maintained School.

Teaching Staff

Principal:	Mrs Christina Hinfey (Acting Principal)
Butterfly Room:	Miss Jackie McCrystal
Primary 1:	Mrs Orla McKernan
Primary 2:	Miss Karen Carberry
Primary 3:	Mr Mark Bradley
Primary 4:	Miss Maria Quinn
Primary 5:	Mr Shane Donnelly
Primary 6:	Mr Joe Coyle
Primary 7:	Mrs Ursula Daly (Acting Vice-Principal)

Ancillary Staff

The work in our school is supported and enhanced by committed support staff.

Executive Officer:	Miss Emma Gormley	
School Caretaker:	Mr Eddie Laird	
Cleaner:	Mr Seamus Beggs & Miss Roisin Duffin	
Classroom Assistants:	Mrs Siobhan Corr Mrs Lisa Armstrong Miss Roseanna Lamb Mrs Siobhain Slean Miss Niamh Armstrong Mrs Kathleen Mills Mrs Ann Harte Miss Fiona Murray Miss Jenna Corrigan	Miss Gemma McElroy Mrs Jacqueline Mullin Miss Niamh Mullin Mrs Pauline Quinn Miss Roisin Duffin Mrs Marian Rafferty Miss Sarah Donnelly Miss Noelle Nugent
Lunchtime Supervisors:	Mrs Siobhain Slean Miss Roisin Duffin	Mrs Maureen St George Mr Seamus Beggs
School Patrol:	Mr Eddie Laird	
School Chaplain:	Fr David Moore	

School Day & Holidays

At St Mary's Primary School, we believe it is very important for pupils to arrive at school punctually each morning as this sets the tone for the school day. Pupils should also be collected promptly in the afternoon. Primary 1 and Primary 2 children complete their school day at 2.00pm, and they may get anxious or distressed if someone is not there to collect them on time. In addition, Primary 1 and Primary 2 teachers are engaged with other classes from 2.10pm so they need to be available from this time.
Subject to Covid-19 restrictions

The school hours are as follows:

Primary 1	9:10 am – 1:45 pm
Primary 2	9:10am – 2:00 pm
Primary 3 - 7	9.10am – 3.10pm

If a child is absent from school a note must be sent to the teacher explaining the reason for absence. All attendance is now computerised and is regularly monitored by the Education Welfare Officer who also checks for patterns of late arrival at school.

The school will be closed for the months of July and August and for all statutory holidays. Information about other holidays i.e. Christmas, Easter and Mid Term breaks will be sent to parents.

In the event of an emergency closure every attempt will be made to notify parents to enable them to make alternative arrangements.



Curriculum

The Primary curriculum is set out in three stages:

- **The Foundation stage:** Primary 1 and Primary 2
- **Key Stage 1:** Primary 3 and Primary 4
- **Key Stage 2:** Primary 5, 6 and 7

The Curriculum for the three stages is set out in seven Areas of Learning.

- **Language and Literacy** (including Talking and Listening, Reading and Writing)
- **Mathematics & Numeracy** (focussing on the development of mathematical concepts and numeracy across the curriculum)
- **The Arts** (including Art and Design, Drama and Music)
- **The World Around Us** (focussing on the development of knowledge skills and understanding in Geography, History and Science and Technology)
- **Personal Development and Mutual Understanding** (focussing on emotional development, social skills, learning to learn, health, relationships and mutual understanding in the local and global community)
- **Physical Education** (focussing on the development of knowledge skills and understanding through play and a range of physical activities)
- **Religious Education** (focussing on encouraging children to become informed and inquisitive about religious beliefs and their relationship with God and others)



At the heart of the curriculum lies an explicit emphasis on the development of skills and capabilities for life long learning and for operating effectively in society. Through opportunities to engage in active learning contexts across all areas of the curriculum, children will develop:

Cross Curricular Skills:

- Communication
- Using Mathematics
- Using Information and Communication Technology

Thinking Skill and Personal Capabilities:

- Thinking, Problem Solving and Decision Making
- Self Management
- Working with Others
- Managing Information
- Being Creative

Our teachers will use a range of teaching strategies and Thinking Matter approaches including, for example, the discussing and negotiating of clear learning intentions with the children and the setting out realistic success criteria for the learning.

Special Educational Needs Provision

Some of the children attending the school will have special educational needs. These may arise from the child's physical incapacities or his/her learning abilities. As it is the intention of the school to maximise the potential of each of the pupils the school will endeavour within its resources to meet these needs.

Children of all abilities are supported throughout the school using a wide range of strategies including in class support, group work and 1:1 tuition. Support work also includes extension for the more able child. Children requiring support are placed on the Special Educational Needs register. They have an Education Plan (EP) which covers the skills that they need to practice in order to progress. The EP's are reviewed regularly and parents are invited to discuss progress with the teacher, to decide on future action and to consider how to support their child at home. Our LSC, Mrs Hinfey (Acting Principal) will oversee the provision of the school's SEN programme. If a child is unable to cope in St Mary's, A Statement of that child's needs will be issued by the Education Authority and the Board will meet these needs either through extra assistance in St Mary's or by a placement in another appropriate school. The process of

determining that a child has special educational needs in accordance with the law is a lengthy one and involves close co-operation among the Teachers, School Medical Authorities, Educational Psychologists and the Parents. The Special Educational Team at Education Authority will make the final decision about the appropriate form of education. They will be pleased to provide information and guidance about the procedure to be followed after they have discussed the child's needs with the LSC/Principal. The School works closely with SPLD Service. Children with Literacy difficulties will be put forward for Literacy screening in their Primary 4 year and support if deemed appropriate will be provided by the SPLD Service from Primary 4 upwards.

Our school also engages support through the RISE initiative. This is a Regional Integrated Support for Education Team which enables children, in Primary 1 - 4, to access various therapies in school rather than in a community setting. Agencies accessed through RISE include Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy. Again, Mrs Hinfey will advise and support parents in this process.

Assessment

Knowing how your child is doing at school is important to you the parent. Monitoring progress has always been a key responsibility for teachers. It is integral to the process of curriculum planning, teaching and learning and indicates successes and identifies weaknesses. To assess pupils, teachers use a range of strategies, including:

- Observations
- Class tests
- Oral questioning
- Teacher judgements
- Assessment units
- Written class work

- Practical activities
- Standardised tests
- Pupils P1-P3 will sit a variety of standardised tests suitable for their age group

Pupils from Primary 4 – Primary 7 completed Standardised Tests PTM and PTE in May each year. The outcomes of such tests are available to parents at Parent Teacher Meetings in Term 1 of the following academic year (Nov/Dec).

Primary 7 pupils can participate in the Grammar School Entrance tests if they opt to do so.



Religious Education

While recognising that the parents are the primary educators of their children, the staff of St Mary's, together with the parents and the community, work together in partnership for the good of the children. As a Catholic school our ethos permeates all aspects of school life and we strive to ensure each child is welcome, cared for and respected

Religious Education is a very important part of the child's education. In our school, it is delivered through:

- the totality of experiences in the school:
- through the religious education programme "Grow in Love" and
- RSE Guidelines.



Children, like all of us, learn faith and values by living them. So the children learn with and from all the different people they meet each day in the school community, and relationships and attitudes are important elements.

We are concerned not only with helping each child realise their potential academically, but to develop emotionally and spiritually in order to play a role in the wider community and beyond.

All the teachers are qualified to teach Religious Education and it is taught daily. The children are prepared for the Sacraments. There are regular liturgies, assemblies and Masses on special occasions.



The Diocesan Adviser for Religious Education visits the school annually and the school chaplain visits the school regularly and supports the delivery of the RE programme. Our class assemblies incorporate the Grow in Love Program and each pupil has the opportunity to participate.

Home/School Partnership

At St Mary's Primary School, we always strive to work in partnership with parents and encourage parents to be involved in the life of the school. The parents of Primary 1 and Primary 2 children generally bring their children to school and collect them. This creates many opportunities for brief, informal communication with the class teachers.

Any parent wishing to discuss their child's progress should arrange an appointment with their class teacher outside teaching hours as this avoids disruption of classroom work.

Parents are very welcome in the school. The Principal, Vice-Principal and teachers are always available to deal with concerns or queries. Again, please contact the school to make an appointment. All administrative queries e.g. school meals, may be clarified with the school secretary. Parents are invited to formal interviews in the Autumn Term and a full school report on each child's progress is issued at the end of each school year. Parents of children in Primary 1 are also invited to meet with the class teacher for a short Baseline Meeting in Term 1.

Parents are kept informed of school events through our website (www.stmaryspomeroy.com, [St Mary's Facebook and Instagram Pages](#)), regular notes and letters, information leaflets, a regular newsletter and curriculum meetings.

Any parent/guardian wishing to remove their child from the school or classroom for an appointment should contact the school in advance, and then on the day of the appointment, parents should report to the secretary who will arrange to have your child meet you at the front desk. In the interests of security and safety no child is allowed to leave the school for any reason unless collected from the main office or classroom by a parent/guardian or named responsible adult.



Homework

St Mary's Primary School sees a value in children engaging in homework as a means of revising and consolidating work done in class, in discovering information unavailable in school, in involving parents in their children's studies and in the development of good work habits. Against this we try to balance each child's need for recreation and the development of private interests and hobbies. The amount of homework should not exceed that which can be done in less than 30 minutes in Key Stage 1 and 40 - 50 minutes in Key Stage 2.

To ensure regularity it will be school policy that homework will be set each night from Monday to Thursday though this may be

relaxed for special occasions and for vacations. We ask parents to assist with homework by ensuring:

- Children do homework in a quiet area
- Children are properly supervised
- Homework is completed with care
- Children practice their reading, spelling and tables
- Homework is signed where applicable

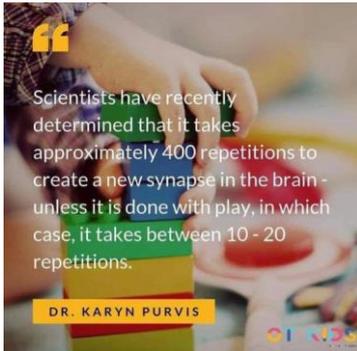
The Voice of the Child

In our school we have a rich ethos which values The Voice of the Child. Our Primary 7 class lead these roles in conjunction with representation from all year groups in a wide range of areas to promote their values, ideas and opinions. Within our school The Voice of the Child is rich through: School Council, Eco Schools, Nurture Team, Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, Reading Leaders, Outdoor Play Leaders, Positive

Behaviour Ambassadors, Bus Prefects, Digital Leaders and 144 Club Leaders. The Pupil's voice is paramount in our Nurture ethos and we continue to empower the pupils to make decisions that positively impact their school and in turn every child.



Outdoor Play



Scientists have recently determined that it takes approximately 400 repetitions to create a new synapse in the brain - unless it is done with play, in which case, it takes between 10 - 20 repetitions.

DR. KARYN PURVIS

Quite often the phrase 'It's just play', can be echoed ever so loudly, however the importance of play for children in the early years is crucial.

Children learn through play in specific subject areas which include Literacy, Numeracy, Physical Education and WAU whilst enjoying the benefits of the great outdoors.

Children gain an abundance of knowledge and skills through play and even more so when playing in the world in which they live.

The areas of play within the early years include:

- Imaginative Area
- Creative Area
- Snack area
- Horticultural Area
- Large-Scale Construction Area
- Sand and Water Areas
- Quiet Area
- Large - Movement Area
- Small – Equipment Area
- Climbing Area

In St. Mary's we endeavour to include all areas of the curriculum within the outdoors and promote a holistic cross-curricular approach.



In the Foundation Stage outdoor sessions are linked to play-based learning as children apply and consolidate their skills and knowledge in an activity-based approach across the connected primary curriculum.



Our outdoor area provides the children with plenty of space for them to extend their imagination and develop their social skills including turn-taking and sharing and also enhance their love for getting involved in messy, sensory play.

Outdoor play allows children to manage their emotions and express their feelings in a safe and open environment. They are given the opportunity to make free choices as to where they would like to play and make creative use of the resources provided to represent their own ideas and interests. Play can often be led by the children and it is important that we as adults go with their ideas and make it their own. This in turn gives the children a huge sense of responsibility and enhances their self-esteem.

Children love to explore mark making, through the use of chalk, paint and stones by drawing pictures or writing simple phrases or high frequency words on the tarmac. They enjoy small, quiet spaces and often the children like to make dens and listen to stories read by an adult under the tarpaulin.

In St Mary's we believe

*"Play gives children
a chance to practice what they are
learning."*



Extra Curricular Provision

St Mary's Primary School provides an extensive programme of extra curricular activities throughout the school year. These activities add a valuable dimension to the education of the children and may include:

School choir
Music & Guitar
Dance
ICT
Extended Schools Cluster

Sports
Drama
Art and Craft
Healthy Kids

The extensive range of extra curricular activities is supported by the Extended School Programme and are delivered not only by our teaching staff but by professional coaches and tutors. We offer a number of opportunities to promote drama and music through diverse activities such as class assemblies, drama and storytelling workshops, visiting theatre companies, the school choir, local feiseanna and seasonal celebrations.

THE BUTTERFLY ROOM

We are very pleased to host a Foundation Stage Learning Support Centre called The Butterfly Room. The Butterfly Room allows children to access the same curriculum as other children at a pace more suited to their needs in a small group setting.

The learning environment is very caring and positive in order to nurture these children to reach their full potential. They are well supported by the class teacher as well as a dedicated classroom assistant. These children integrate with the mainstream P1 and P2 classes for outdoor learning, break time, lunchtime, and PE lessons.

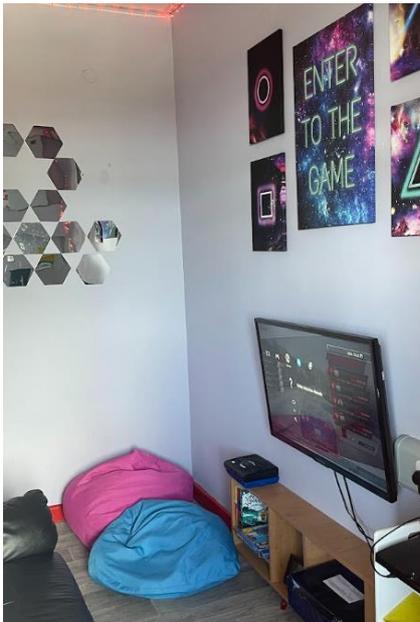


Nurture

In St Mary's the children are at the centre of everything that we do. Nurture is prevalent throughout the whole school and the Rainbow Room (Nurture Room) is at the heart of our ethos – “*Today's child, tomorrow's future.*” We, as a school, strive to put in place nurturing programmes that will enable our children to grow, to learn, develop lifelong skills and to flourish socially, emotionally and academically.

Safe Spaces

Each classroom in our school offers our children a safe space to go if they are feeling overwhelmed or just need to take a break from a busy school day. We have also developed central safe spaces called “The Umbrella Room” and “The Den”. These safe havens help our pupils regulate their emotions. It helps to ensure they are ready to learn and will reach their full potential.



The Rainbow Room

The Rainbow Room is our nurture classroom. Children who avail of this room work towards developing social skills which will enhance their learning. The Rainbow Room is facilitated by a teacher and a classroom assistant. The children attend in small groups and as well as learning through the curriculum, they participate in therapy, sensory activities and other therapies. These provisions help to prepare our children for school life. Nurture provision lasts for two full terms.

Our nurturing ethos and provision has impacted the children in our care very positively and has been central to enabling children to thrive on their social, emotional and academic journey.



Literacy Centre

The aim of our Literacy Centre is to nurture a love of reading in the school and in particular to foster in our children a love of books. The Friends of St Mary's worked with the school staff and local community to raise funds to develop the centre. Many local volunteers helping with the actual construction while members of the community produced the shelving, seating and book storage.

The Accelerated Reader Programme which had been introduced to inspire the children to read more often and foster a rich enjoyment of reading, was a major factor in the creation of the Literacy Centre. The Centre creates a warm, comfortable and tranquil environment where the children can read without being interrupted. The children also have the opportunity to have a break from the classroom surroundings as teachers bring the children out to read stories and improve listening skills.



*"The more that
you read,
the more things you will know.
The more that you learn,
the more places you'll go".*

Dr. Seuss

Uniform

There is a school uniform. It consists of a navy sweatshirt with school crest, red polo shirt and navy trousers for the boys and a navy pinafore or skirt for the girls if preferred. As an alternative, girls may wear a navy cardigan. An optional waterproof fleece is now also available.

It is our wish that children should wear the uniform as we feel it gives the children a sense of identity and loyalty with the school. Jeans or leisurewear should not be worn. All uniform should be clearly marked with the pupil's full name.

It is expected that all children change for Physical Education. PE kit should be kept in school, clearly labelled, in a draw-string bag. In the interests of safety, we ask that earrings are not worn at any time but particularly on the days of PE lessons.



Positive Behaviour

Standards of behaviour in our school are very good and there are no exceptional discipline problems. However, the school has produced a separate booklet on Positive Behaviour and this is available to all actual or prospective parents.

It is the school policy that discipline should be based on respect for self, respect for other pupils and respect for the whole school community. In those cases, where a child has

transgressed the school will seek to discuss with the child/children the reasons for their choices and they will be nurtured using our Pastoral and Safeguarding policies. Parents will also be involved in helping to improve the choices their child makes in regards to behaviour.

A copy of the school's Behaviour Policy is available on request.

Health Education

In St Mary's Primary School, we are very aware of our role in helping pupils develop a healthy lifestyle. One of the main aspects of our Health Education Programme is Healthy Eating. We aim to give our pupils the information and skills needed to enable them make responsible decisions about their diet.

Our pupils:

- Learn about a healthy diet
- Explore the relationship between diet and health
- Are encouraged to drink milk or water
- Are encouraged to eat fruit, vegetables or bread based snacks at mid-morning break
- Eat a balanced lunch or school dinner.

Our school meals are prepared on site, are of a consistently high quality and have numerous healthy options as verified by 'Eat Safe' accreditation).

St Mary's operates a "Healthy Breaks" policy whereby children are asked to choose the healthier option and bring a piece of fruit, a sandwich, a yoghurt etc to school for their snack at break. Water or milk are the preferred drink allowed as part of the Healthy Break scheme.

Healthy hot school meals are provided in the dining hall at the cost of £2.60 per day. Pupils may bring a packed lunch if they so prefer.

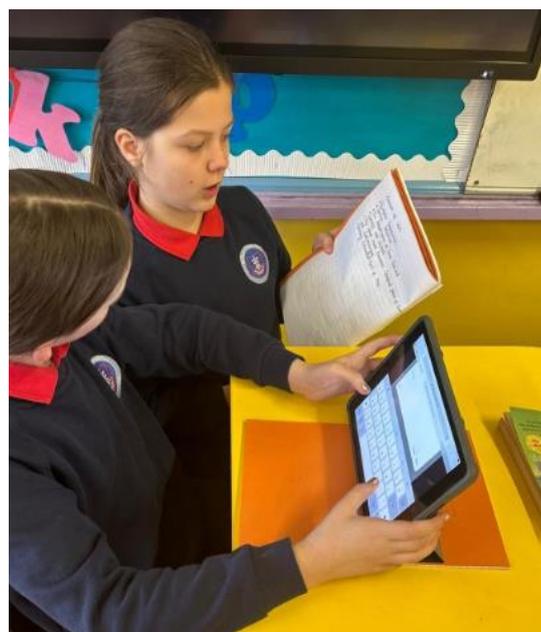
Parents Support Group

A Parent Support Group for our school, The Friends of St Mary's was established a number of years ago to raise additional monies for the benefit of all pupils in the school.

This group has been highly successful and money raised from fund raising activities has been used to enhance the children's' learning

experiences by providing extra equipment and resources.

The group is continually in need of members to join and offer support, so if you are interested, please contact the school.



Pastoral Care & Child Protection

In line with the policy of maximising the potential of each pupil the school recognises that it has a responsibility to do everything possible to care for each pupil's physical and emotional well-being. The school will endeavour to provide a comfortable and safe environment for learning where the quality of the teacher pupil relationship is valued as a vital element in the personal and educational development of each child.

Due to the nature of primary education it will be the responsibility of each class teacher to look after the pastoral needs of the children in his/her class, though a female teacher will be responsible for any problems of senior girls. Class teachers will attempt to resolve the worries of new pupils and to relieve their anxieties. The Principal is grateful for information about any difficult home circumstances which may be causing distress or anxiety.

When a child is sick or injured the school staff will, in the first case, attempt to contact the parent. If this is not possible the child will be brought to the Health Centre or hospital if required. In less severe cases it would be appreciated if parents would nominate an emergency contact. **In all cases it is school policy to act in the best interests of the child.**

The school should be notified about any medical problems, even if temporary, and about any medicine that might have to be taken. It is policy in school that staff do not administer non prescribed medicine eg Calpol. Prescribed medicines may be administered following consultation with the Principal and policies in place.

The responsibilities for schools in the area of child protection are laid down in the Children's (NI) Order 1995 (Vol 6). Because of their day to day contact with children all staff are well placed to observe signs of abuse, neglect, changes in behaviour and emotional issues. All Staff, teaching and non teaching have received training and are aware of the procedures as laid down by DENI and ELB which form school policy.

Safeguarding Team:

Designated Teacher:

Mrs U. Daly

Deputy Designated Teacher:

Miss Jacqueline McCrystal

Principal:

Mrs Christina Hinfey (**Acting Principal**)

A detailed Pastoral Care Policy and Child Protection Policy are available on request.

Conclusion

Now that you have read this Prospectus, we hope that you will have some idea of the rich and varied life your child will have during his/her time here in St Mary's. You can be assured that his/her well-being will be our concern at all times during his/her years here.

We will be happy to clarify information contained in the prospectus or answer any other queries. Please contact the school to arrange an appointment.

