

## St. Francis Primary School

### Calendar Dates

#### April

25<sup>th</sup> April P6/7 attending Bible Exhibition

26<sup>th</sup> April- Industrial Action, school closed to pupils.

#### May

1<sup>st</sup> May – Bank Holiday (School closure)

8<sup>th</sup> May – Bank Holiday (School closure)

18<sup>th</sup> May Local Elections

29<sup>th</sup> May Bank Holiday (School closure)

30 – 31<sup>st</sup> School closed.

#### June

1<sup>st</sup> June School Closed.

Pupils and staff in on 2<sup>nd</sup> June.



School Council in action!



Pupils enjoy the 'Water Sleeves' dance performance.



P7 pupils work on reading and writing music!

# Principal's Newsletter



Welcome to the Term 2 summary Newsletter! This term has featured lots of Shared Education Events with our partner school, Ballydown PS and our Primary One pupils enjoyed coaching from world-class instructors at Salto Gymnastics Centre in Lisburn where they have flourished. They have been building core and fine motor skills as well as becoming increasingly confident with the equipment. Well done P1!

This term's recipient of the 'Barnabus Award' is Conn Lennon from P6 who has exemplified Service to others with his support for classmates and his consistent demonstration of Teamwork and Kindness. He was nominated by lots of pupils who gave examples of how he helped them in the yard at break or lunch, and how he is a good friend to all.

Primary 4 participated in the RSPB annual Bird Watch and had their binoculars trained to count the numbers of blackbirds and goldfinch they could see at their feeding station. Some have really caught the 'Twitcher' bug and have asked our school council to set up a 'bird watching' station in the yard. We have used funds from the Edina Science Grant to purchase some new binoculars and the school council has set up a booking station for those wishing to book out some binoculars at lunchtime. We are seeking donations of a few car or tractor tyres to create a seating area for our bird watchers. If you can help, please email me.

In February, the whole school took part in 'Safer Internet Week'. It was clear that our families make a concerted effort to talk to each other about staying safe online, and our pupils demonstrated an age-appropriate level of awareness of some issues that can arise. Through group-work and whole-class activities, pupils explored these challenges and how they can navigate them safely whilst still getting the most out of the internet.

We have taken our first steps into becoming an accredited 'Forest School'. Miss McNally and Mrs Macauley are both currently completing qualifications as 'Forest School Leaders', funded by Shared Education. As a 'Forest School', our pupils will have opportunities over the course of the school year to engage in Literacy, Numeracy, World Around Us and Personal Development skills in an outdoor learning environment, either on site, or on Whyte's Estate. Our talented teachers have developed a handbook; scouted a site for our very own fire-pit and have developed a three-year plan to allow them to introduce and develop the 'Forest School' approach initially in P1 and P4 and then extending this to other classes in years to come.

Our talented P5 pupils shared their hard work on their animal projects in the P5 annual showcase. Thank you to all of our parents and relatives who came out to support the children. They wowed us all with facts, jokes, artwork and creativity. Well done P5!

Building on from last year's event, we welcomed back the Confucius Institute for another superb Chinese culture event. Pupils were taught about the Chinese New Year and had the chance to watch talented performances of the 'Water Sleeves' dance and the Guzheng, a traditional Chinese instrument. Our pupils have been availing of weekly lessons from our Chinese instructor, Miss Rui Zao, in partnership with our friends in Banbridge Academy.

Our P6/7 pupils have availed of a number of workshops in Drama, Science and Geography, all delivered by teachers from New-Bridge Integrated Secondary School. We have also recently welcomed pupils from St. Patrick's, Banbridge who are currently delivering a GAA skills programme to our P6 and P7 pupils this term. We are very fortunate to have such strong links with great local secondary schools who are helping prepare our pupils for their transition to secondary school.

Following an audit, it was discovered that our Fire Safety systems needed a whole-scale update. Despite the difficult financial backdrop EA are currently operating within, we were able to advocate for our school and our system has been upgraded to a fully compliant model which meets the highest standards.

Finally, I would like to offer my very sincere thanks to our families and community donors for their unwavering support of our school. I fully appreciate that for many households, circumstances have changed. The cost-of-living increase has placed more pressure than ever before on our families. In spite of this, your generosity, community donations and the dedication of our PTA has in the course of 20 months, funded Interactive Boards for each of our classes; 8 laptops for pupils' use; First Aid Training for our P6 and P7 classes; an author visit for KS1 and special events for our pupils including the Santa Run; a Scavenger hunt; Halloween discos and celebration days for the children who have received sacraments. The impact this has on your children's school experience and their learning opportunities cannot be overstated.

**Thank you**, for your continued support.

Mrs McKeown.

Through their **Service, Teamwork, Ambition and Respect**,  
Our **STAR** pupils continue to shine!