

# In the Loop

SAINTANNESPS.COM

OCTOBER 2025



## Dates for your diary:

**Midterm:** The school will be closed from Monday 27<sup>th</sup> until Friday 31<sup>st</sup> October for the midterm break.

**Flu Vaccinations:** The School Health Team will administer flu vaccinations on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> October to those pupils whose parents have granted permissions.

**School Photographs:** On Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> October, the school photographer will be in to take marketing photographs featuring pupils from Nursery to P7. These photos will be taken in line with existing parental permissions.

School photographs (individual and class) for our Nursery and P1 pupils will take place on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> October. Further details on how to order your photography will be shared closer to the date.

**Parent Teacher Meetings:** Our formal parent teacher meetings provide an opportunity for you to discuss the progress of your child with the class teacher. These will take place on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> November.

**"Can I get a phone?"**

Simple question, but what is your answer?

Are you debating this question?

Do you feel smartphones are to be avoided?

Has your child just got their first phone?

We understand your responsibilities & concerns.

Parentline has gathered information to help you to make this decision and help keep everyone informed, connected and safe.

Packed full of useful links, support & guidance. Helpful Q&A's to use with your child.

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BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND

PARENT WORKSHOP

**Worry to Wonder**

TUESDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 10AM-11.30AM

ONLINE VIA ZOOM

A workshop for parents of primary school aged children exploring why our children worry and ways we can support them.

CALL NOW TO BOOK YOUR PLACE

0808 8020 400



' MIGHTY OAKS FROM LITTLE ACORNS GROW '



## A Warm Welcome to our new Vice-Principal

Hi everyone,

My name is Sara Hunter and I'm absolutely delighted to introduce myself as the new Vice Principal at St Anne's. As a past pupil, it's incredibly special for me to return to a school that holds so many fond memories — and I've already felt the warmth and welcome from staff, pupils, and families.



I've spent the last six years as Principal of Cathedral Nursery School, and before that, I taught for ten years at St Oliver Plunkett. I'm passionate about early intervention and love helping children develop a growth mindset and build resilience — qualities I believe are key to lifelong learning and wellbeing.

Outside of school, I'm a proud mum to two sporty boys, Ethan and Ewan, so most weekends you'll find me cheering them on from the sidelines of a Gaelic pitch! I also love getting out into nature — forest walks are my favourite, especially in Glenariff, which is such a peaceful and beautiful spot.

And when I get a quiet moment, I'm usually listening to music — I'm a big fan of Stereophonics, Coldplay, and Ed Sheeran.

I'm really looking forward to working with you all and getting to know everyone better. Please do come and say hello if you see me around the school — I'd love to chat!

Warm wishes,  
**Mrs Sara Hunter**

## Congratulations to our newly elected school councillors!

We are thrilled to welcome our new School Councillors, who will be representing pupil voice and helping shape the future of St Anne's. Mrs Hunter (Vice Principal) is excited to support their aspiring leadership as they begin their journey. Throughout October, our councillors will hold their first meeting, where they'll share ideas from their classmates on how to make St Anne's an even better place to learn and grow. Each councillor will also be buddied with a class from Nursery to Primary 3, helping to build connections across the school.

Stay tuned. Updates on their brilliant initiatives will be shared in upcoming Loops!

## REACH Programme

Our Primary 6 and Primary 7 classes are continuing with an enriching programme called 'REACH', which is designed to support the emotional development and wellbeing of children and young people.

The REACH programme focuses on five key themes:

- Self-perception and awareness
- Motivation
- Social skills
- Resilience
- Coping strategies

These themes are explored through engaging activities and discussions that help pupils better understand themselves and others, build confidence, and develop tools to manage challenges effectively.

REACH is part of our commitment to implementing the Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing in Education Framework, which aims to create a nurturing and supportive school environment where every child can thrive emotionally and socially.

## P2 Football

P2 classes will begin their weekly sessions to develop their fundamental skills, with Coach John from Eire Og, on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> October.







## A Prayerful Start to our School Journey

A heartfelt thank you to Fr. Martin for leading our Beginning of Year Service for P4–P7 pupils on Thursday, 25th September. It was a warm, personal, and meaningful celebration that helped set a positive tone for the year ahead.

We are also grateful to the parents, carers, and grandparents who joined us for this special occasion—your presence made it even more memorable.

Fr. Martin also spent time with our P1–P3 pupils, leading short prayer services tailored to their age group. He is looking forward to visiting our nursery children soon and sharing some quiet moments with them too.

## Celebrating Mass Together

We are delighted to share that our weekly tradition of attending Tuesday Mass has resumed. Each class will take part on a rotational basis, and we will provide a timetable so you can see when your child's class is attending. If you are free, we warmly welcome you to join us on their designated date—your presence is always appreciated.

## Reminder: Mass Times

Fr Martin would love to see as many of our families and children at these celebrations as possible, helping to strengthen the bonds between home, school and parish.

- Saturday @ 5.00pm: Sunday Vigil Mass
- Sunday @ 11.00am: Children's Liturgy

## Halloween Coffee Morning – Join Us for a Brew and a Chat!

We are looking forward to welcoming you to our Halloween Coffee Morning on Friday 24th October at 9.00am in the Dining Hall, Birch Building.

This is a lovely opportunity for the PTA to greet new parents, carers, and grandparents, and to reconnect with familiar faces from previous years. Whether you are meeting someone new or catching up with friends, it's a great way to spend half an hour enjoying a coffee and a chat.

There will be ballot prizes, and all proceeds will go towards supporting our school. For those short on time, take-away teas and coffees will also be available.

We hope to see you there!

Next PTA meeting: **Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> October.**

New members are welcome and very much needed!



## Curriculum Mornings

A heartfelt thank you to all the parents and carers who joined us for our recent Curriculum Mornings.

Following your feedback, we made changes to the content this year and hope you found the sessions both informative and engaging. We are also very grateful to our dedicated staff for their preparation and to the PTA for kindly providing tea and coffee.

As we are always looking to improve, we'd really appreciate it if attendees could take a moment to complete the short evaluation form.

## Curriculum Mornings Feedback 2025

Your feedback is very welcome and helps us make future events even better.





## Peace Players

We are excited to share that P6AL will be participating in the PlusSport in-school cross-community basketball programme, delivered by PeacePlayers Northern Ireland. This initiative uses the game of basketball to bring together young people from various communities across Northern Ireland.

As part of the programme, P6AL will be twinned with Knockbreda P.S., allowing pupils to build friendships and understanding through shared activities. Alongside basketball drills and skills, pupils will take part in age-appropriate community relations and team-building workshops, helping them develop teamwork, respect, and confidence.

We look forward to seeing our pupils grow both on and off the court through this exciting opportunity.

## Adventure Awaits

We're excited to announce that our P1 to P3 pupils will enjoy a special performance of Robin Hood by M & M Productions on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> October. This engaging and entertaining show promises to bring the classic tale to life and provide a memorable experience for our younger learners.

We look forward to a fun-filled morning of storytelling and adventure!

## Trials Underway

We're thrilled to kick off trials for our Girls' Development Soccer Team, continuing throughout October. A huge well done to all the P5/6 girls who have stepped forward with enthusiasm and determination—you've already made us proud!

Coach Dale is really excited to see the talent and teamwork on display. Watch this space for updates as the squad begins to take shape!

## Celebrating Effort and Team Spirit

The P6 and P7 Gaelic football trials, which began back in June, have now come to a close. This extended process gave every interested pupil the chance to showcase their skills across multiple sessions.

A huge congratulations to all the boys and girls who took part! Their enthusiasm and effort were outstanding, and we're incredibly proud of each one of them. While not everyone could be selected for the final teams, every participant contributed to a fantastic sporting experience.

Thank you to Mr Teague, Miss Lavery, Mr Donnelly and Mr Murphy for organising and leading the trials with such care and commitment.

We look forward to many more opportunities where all pupils can participate, enjoy, and grow in their sporting journey. Best of luck to our teams for the year ahead!

Boys and girls' gaelic training for those pupils selected begins on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> September.

The boys' football league games begin on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> October. Times and venues to be confirmed.

## Promoting Positive Behaviour

To celebrate our pupils' fantastic efforts and to promote positive behaviour throughout the school, we're delighted to present a selection of monthly awards. For October, certificates will be awarded for:

- Outstanding Homework
- Moving Quietly and Responsibly Around the School
- Being Organised and Ready to Learn
- Following School Rules

We are proud of all our children and wish them the very best in working towards these goals. We encourage parents and guardians to talk about these focus areas with their children and support them in doing their best.





## Nursery News

### Jo Jingles

Our fun music and movement classes continue with Jo Jingles and Miss Nicola on 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> October. Pupils will have lots of opportunities to develop attention and listening skills, to follow simple instructions, explore rhythm and beat as well as enjoy using a range of percussion instruments.

### Storytime

Miss Barbara, a librarian from Finaghy Library will make the first of her monthly visits to the nursery on 7<sup>th</sup> October. She will bring some Autumn and Halloween inspired stories to share with the boys and girls.

### Penny Pumpkin

As Halloween approaches, we will have a visit from Penny the Halloween Pumpkin on 20<sup>th</sup> October. Penny will be joined by the 'Witch' from 'Room on the Broom' for an entertaining retelling of the story.

## BIG Bedtime Read

Once again, St Anne's Nursery Unit is fortunate to take part in the Getting Ready to Learn initiative. Getting Ready to Learn is a programme which aims to encourage and develop parental involvement in children's early learning. The programme has allowed us to develop a series of home lending packs focusing on developing a love of stories and books as well as activities to develop fine and gross motor skills.

### Bedtime hour at Finaghy Library

To celebrate the launch of our story lending sacks we would like to invite you to come along to a special bedtime story telling session with Miss Barbara the librarian at Finaghy Library.

Dates are as follows:

- Miss Hamill's class:  
Monday 13th October  
6:30-7:30pm.
- Mrs Schmidt's class:  
Monday 20th October  
6:30-7:30pm.

Come along to Finaghy Library in your pjs with your favourite teddy for stories, rhymes and supper. When story time is finished you can bring home the first of your weekly bedtime story lending sacks to enjoy more story fun at home each night!

## Going Batty

Come along to the nursery annual bat walk where we will join local conservationist Aidan Crean as we explore the nursery and school grounds in search of our resident bats! We have bat boxes installed all around the nursery and school grounds and our walk will give us the chance to observe and learn about the bats on our doorstep.

Date: Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> October.

- Mrs Hamill's class at 7:30 pm
- Mrs Schmidt's class at 8:30pm.

For safety reasons each child should be accompanied by one adult (over the age of 16). Please remember to wrap up warm, wear bright colours and bring a torch.

## Supporting Pupils' Personal Development

As part of our commitment to personal development, we have organised two workshops for our P6 and P7 pupils on 16th October, delivered by the *Love for Life* organisation.

P7 pupils will take part in 'What's Inside', an interactive session designed to help them understand and manage the physical and emotional changes that often bring concern and anxiety at this stage of life.





Meanwhile, P6 pupils will engage in 'Choices and Changes', a one-hour workshop introducing the key changes associated with puberty in a sensitive and age-appropriate way.

All Love for Life programmes are designed to be engaging, informative, and suitable for the age group, helping children to learn, reflect, and grow in their understanding of this important area.

Further details will be shared with families, and parental consent will be required for participation.

## P5 Win Big!

We are delighted to announce that Miss Edwards' P5 class has won the Hedgerow Heroes Competition! Their creative and energetic rap performance, titled 'Make Some Noise for the Hedgerows', impressed the judges and secured a fantastic prize for our school.

As winners, the class has earned: 20 metres of native hedgerow to be planted on school grounds; and Three workshop visits from *Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful* (KNIB) staff to support planting, care, and learning.

A video of the winning rap performance will be available on the school website soon—stay tuned!

## Eco-Update

### Eco-Code: Mission Possible

Following the achievement of our **Green Flag status**, we remain committed to maintaining and building on this success.

### Eco-Elections

Well done to all P4–P7 pupils who put themselves forward to become eco-agents. Their speeches, presentations, and posters were full of creativity, knowledge, and commitment. A big thank you to the adults who supported them throughout the process.

Congratulations to those elected as class representatives! The newly formed Eco-Agency will hold its first meeting on **Friday, 3rd October**, where they'll carry out the annual audit, set targets, and begin drafting their action plan.

### Cash for Clobber

We continue to welcome donations of unwanted clothing to support our eco-projects. Items can be placed in the 'Cash for Clobber' clothing bank, located in the church car park opposite the parish centre. Your contributions help raise valuable funds while promoting sustainability.

## Athletics

Some of our KS2 boys and girls will complete in the Belfast Primary School Relay Event on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> October at Victoria Park. We wish them the very best as they take on this exciting challenge.

## Safer Schools NI

The Safer Schools NI app is a free interactive safeguarding tool designed for school communities across Northern Ireland.



Please download the Safer Schools NI App using the instructions in the letter attached and create a parent/carer account using the 4-digit code **1747**.

Additional information can be found in the letter attached.







## NSPCC Speak out. Stay safe. programme

Dear Parent/Carer

During the month of October, we will be participating in the **NSPCC's Speak out. Stay safe online** programme. This is a safeguarding programme which aims to help children understand abuse in all its forms and to recognise the signs of abuse in a child-friendly way. Children are taught to speak out if they are worried, either to a trusted adult or Childline. This consists of an online assembly and supporting classroom-based activities. In the online assembly, the 'Speak out. Stay safe.' messages are delivered in a fun and interactive way with the help of their mascot, Buddy, as well as special guest appearances from Ant and Dec. There are separate Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 assemblies and activities, based on age-appropriate materials.

If you would like to know more about the *Speak out. Stay safe.* programme you can find information on the NSPCC website: [www.nspcc.org.uk/speakout](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/speakout).

### Online safety hub

You may also like to visit the NSPCC [Online Safety Hub](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/online-safety) where you will find advice and information on a range of different online safety topics including gaming, social media, sharing nudes, parental controls and more. You will also find online safety information for families of children with additional needs and disabilities. NSPCC have worked with Ambitious about Autism and parents and carers who have children with additional needs and disabilities to create activities to help talk about online safety. You can find these at [www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/online-safety-families-children-with-send](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/online-safety-families-children-with-send).

### Childline Under 12's Website

Childline also have a website with age-appropriate advice for primary school children on topics such as bullying. It also has games and other interactive tools. Your child can visit it at [www.childline.org.uk/kids](http://www.childline.org.uk/kids). If you'd like to know more about the NSPCC's work, or take a look at the wide range of information and advice which is available for parents and carers, please visit their website: [www.nspcc.org.uk/parents](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/parents).

### Talking PANTS with your children

Talk PANTS is a simple conversation to help keep your child safe from sexual abuse. From P through to S, each letter of PANTS provides a simple but valuable rule that can help keep your child safe. You can find out more and download the free resources at [www.nspcc.org.uk/pants](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/pants).

### Parentline

Parent Line is a support service for parents and carers who are looking for advice, guidance, or someone to talk to about parenting challenges.

Parent Line offers:

- **Confidential support** via phone, text, or online chat
- **Advice on parenting issues**, such as child behaviour, sleep, school, relationships, and more
- **Emotional support** for parents feeling overwhelmed, stressed, or isolated
- **Referrals to other services** if needed, such as counselling or family support

