

Our Lady's Girls' Primary School

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UPDATE MAY 2020

Dear parents/guardians,

We hope you and family are all keeping well. Although we are not all in the school building, the staff are working very hard behind the scenes to support your children. We urge you to keep in touch with us as much as you possibly can, through website, Seesaw, Twitter and Facebook. From the beginning of lockdown, we have been investigating the most appropriate ways to connect with our pupils. There is no 'one size fits all' but with such a dedicated staff we are constantly finding ways to improve delivery.

Mental Health Awareness Week: 18-24 May 2020

This week is Mental Health Awareness Week. The coronavirus pandemic has had a tremendous impact on our mental health, and many people are finding things hard emotionally. Life has changed drastically and quickly, leading to widespread stress, anxiety and uncertainty. So looking after ourselves and others, has never been more important. Try our 'Take 5' Plan at the bottom of this letter. We intend to dedicate one area per day to the Take 5 plan. This began today with our whole school Zoom/Facebook PE lesson with Gary – *Be Active!* Keep an eye on Facebook this week where you will see lots of ideas to keep your mental health and that of your family, in a good place.

Zoom

Our P6&7 girls have recently begun to use this communication platform to assemble socially with their teacher and classmates during lockdown. They have been able to see their friends and their teacher and have played a few games and quizzes. We were hoping to introduce Zoom to other year groups, as it has proved to be popular with the girls. We have reports from parents telling us that it has raised the spirits of their children. You may be aware of recent media coverage regarding Child Protection issues and Zoom conferencing. This happened when there was a lack of security and passwords were shared. Zoom have since tightened up on this. We will continue to use Zoom until we have a more secure platform to use and because we can see the overall benefits for our girls. We must point out that it is your responsibility to give permission to your daughter to take part, ensuring that they keep the Zoom Rules that have been issued, and you must ensure that passwords are not shared. It is also essential that your Zoom account has your daughter's name or family name on it for security reasons. Further instructions about this will be issued.

Reports

School reports for your children will be issued in mid-June. This year they will take on a simplified format as the academic school year has not been completed. We will post out a copy of your child's report to each family, however if you would like a PDF copy, please supply your child's teacher with your email address through Seesaw.

Holidays

Next Monday and Tuesday 25 & 26 May 'school' will be closed for the end of May bank holiday. Teachers will not be available online. Take this extended weekend to give your child a break from work and have some creative fun instead. Online schooling will end for this academic year, on Tuesday 30 June at 12 noon.

PTA News

The PTA are keeping busy and active behind the scenes, however, our work is very different. We have been reaching out to families to help them through these difficult times and have been able to provide food parcels for those who requested them. We also made a donation to the Marrowbone Community Hub, as they are doing fantastic work in the area and are delivering food parcels to many of our families.

Halifax Grant

The PTA applied for a Halifax grant and have successfully received over £2600. The grant application requested money to buy art supplies for all our families and also a number of tablets for those families who have no technology, or where two or more children are trying to access online learning using only one device. These tablets will be loaned out by the PTA and we will issue details about how to apply to borrow one, as soon as the tablets arrive.

Competitions

The PTA ran a very successful Easter bonnet competition and then a very popular competition for a Hudson's Pizza voucher. Congratulations to our Easter Bonnet winners and to Aideen McDonnell, our Pizza Voucher winner. We would like to thank Hudson's for donating this voucher- they are always very generous to us. We plan to run more competitions through Facebook- we are trying to spread a little happiness to everyone, so keep an eye out.

Donations

Alongside the Halifax grant, we have had some private donations made to the PTA. We will be using this money to help those who are finding things financially difficult at this time.

If you need help, please just ask. As a PTA we have always had the full support of our families - now we are here to support *you*!

Get in Touch

If you need to get in touch, please contact Mrs Boyle through the school email address info@ourladysgirlsprimary.belfast.ni.sch.uk, or by PM on Facebook. Alternatively, if you send a private message to any teacher on the Seesaw Family app they will forward it to us.

The PTA are also keen to hear from you if you have any ideas about how they can help families at this time. Get in touch if you have an idea.

September 2020

As yet, we do not know what next September will look like. One thing we do know - it will not be like any other year. We imagine that it will be a year of recovery, both emotionally and academically and our priority will be the well-being of our girls. Unfortunately, school will be very different. The pandemic will not be over, so we will be providing plenty of nurturing for our children. They will have to socially distance, so they will be taught in small groups alongside online learning which will continue for the foreseeable future. There will be a huge amount of planning by staff in advance of September, so be assured we will do our very best to provide a safe and secure learning environment for your daughter, where she will be cared for and nurtured.

Thanks you for your support during lockdown. It is a difficult time for everyone. Do not hesitate to ask for help should you need it. Keep safe.

Yours sincerely,

Emer Hughes



Be Active

Play, join a team sport, walk, cycle, run around. Being active helps us keep fit and also makes us feel good.



Connect

Have fun with friends, talk with family, help out at home, share your feelings. Being connected makes us feel loved.



Give

Do something nice for a friend or family member, share, smile. Give to yourself - play, be creative, use your imagination, draw, paint, dance, dream. When we give to ourselves or others it makes us feel happy.



Take Notice

Watch and listen to what's going on around you, changing seasons, bugs, birds, flowers and rainbows. Take notice of how you feel.



Keep Learning

Read for fun, learn how to do something new, try your best. Set a challenge you will enjoy. Learning new things makes us feel proud as well as being fun to do.