



St Mary's High School

Newry

Year 8

Transition Guide



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Principal's Welcome



Dear Year 8 Students

I am delighted to warmly welcome all our new Year 8 students to St Mary's High School and trust that this Year 8 Guide will give you important information about your new school.

As a new Year 8 student, you will have many opportunities to meet new friends and enjoy your learning in a range of subjects. Our students are encouraged and challenged to explore their talents and abilities and you will enjoy a range of academic and pastoral successes as you work to achieve your full potential. We are very proud of our school and you will receive all the support and help you need to ensure that your move from Primary School to St Mary's is straight forward.

I feel privileged to be Principal of such a vibrant school, one where students live up to our school motto, Optimum Semper Facere – 'Always To Do One's Best' as they learn in a happy and positive environment.

Our dedicated and caring staff will support and encourage you to realise your potential and ambitions. As you journey through your years in St Mary's you will grow into a confident young person who is equipped with the necessary skills and qualities.

I look forward to welcoming all of you to St Mary's at the end of August.

Best wishes

Miss D Crawley

Principal

Year Tutor



Dear Year 8 Students

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to St Mary's High School.

This is a time of great change for you. You have arrived at a very exciting time in your life, as you begin the move from primary school to post-primary school.

As your Year Tutor, I appreciate that this will be a daunting time trying to find your way in a new school, but don't worry, after a few days it will feel as if you were here for years!

When you arrive at our school in late August, you will be placed into your new Form Class and will meet your Form Teacher who will be there to help and guide you during your time here in St Mary's. If you have any worries or problems, your Form Teacher is the person to turn to for assistance.

In Year 8, you will meet your Form Teacher every day at Registration, and I will speak to you at our weekly Assembly, every Monday morning.

Like any school St Mary's has a set of rules and guidelines which are there to help us all and I know you will pay close attention to them. Both your Form Teacher and subject teachers will help you become familiar with the running of the school.

Finally, I hope you enjoy your time in St Mary's. You will meet some old friends, make many new ones and have many opportunities to develop all your talents and skills! The very best of luck for your induction and indeed for the year ahead.

Best Wishes

Mrs A Hughes
Year Tutor

Vice Principal, Pastoral Care



Dear Year 8 Students

May I take this opportunity to welcome you all to St. Mary's. Moving to secondary school is an exciting time however it is understandable that some students may feel anxious about moving to 'big school'. Any worries that you may have will quickly disappear when you become familiar with your new school, the staff and other students in your Form Class.

In St Mary's, you will be supported by all our staff. Your Year Tutor Mrs A. Hughes and your Form Teacher will help you settle in and achieve your very best. You will have many exciting opportunities in St Mary's, studying new subjects, making new friends, having new teachers, becoming a member of our many Student Voice Groups and taking part in the extra-curricular and sporting activities. I am very confident you will enjoy each day at school, being proud to be a St Mary's Student.

Best Wishes

Mr M Fitzpatrick

Vice Principal

Phyrne Glenn & Mary-Kate Donaghy - Head Girls



A very warm welcome to all new Year 8 Students

We are delighted to have been recently elected as Head Girls of St Mary's. We just love our school and can remember the mix of excitement and apprehension we both felt when we first joined St Mary's in September 2017.

Starting a new school is a very exciting and yet anxious time, rest assured you will soon settle in and become proud to be a 'St Mary's Girl' just like us. You will soon make many new friends and the teachers here will provide you with so much support and help, especially your Year Tutor, Mrs Hughes and your new Form Teacher. Other students will help you if you ever get lost around the school so please do not worry, and ask for help.

In St Mary's you will have the opportunities to join a range of Student Voice, Sporting and Extra-Curricular Groups and our advice to you all is to get involved in the life of the school and join as many groups as you can. You will meet new friends and over the years make many happy memories.

We really hope you all love our school as much as we do. We look forward to meeting you in September and wish you every success in St Mary's.

Phyrne and Mary-Kate



The School Day



There are **9 periods** in a school day.
School starts at 8.55am and finishes
at 3.00pm.

School begins at **8.55am** every morning and all students are expected to be in school by this time.
The day continues as follows:

8.55am-9.15am	Assembly/Registration - Period 1
9.15am-10.00am	Period 2
10.00am-10.45am	Period 3
10.45am-11.30am	Period 4
11.30am-12.05pm	Period 5
*12.05pm-12.45pm	Lunch - Period 6
*12.50pm-1.30pm	Period 7
1.30pm-2.15pm	Period 8
2.15pm-3.00pm	Period 9

St. Mary's operates a Biometric System for the school canteen. A letter will be sent with the school information in August to fully explain how the system operates.

*KS3 Lunchtime – 12.05pm - 12.45pm

*KS4 Lunchtime – 12.50pm - 1.30pm

As part of our Year 8 induction, Year 11 Guides will escort your Form Class to and from each class. These Guides will assist you for the first week until you settle in and find your way around your new school. Year 8 students are also allowed to go five minutes early for lunch for the first two weeks. This will give you a chance to become familiar with the canteen / lunch hall and our biometric system.

If Absent from School

When you return to school, bring a note from home explaining why you were absent. Give this note to your Form Teacher. Notes are also available in the back of the Homework Diary – Explanations for Absences.

It is essential that we have an up to date **mobile/home telephone number** where parents/carers may be contacted during the day or in the case of emergencies.



Zofia's School Day

This is Zofia Domanska, she is in year 8 and went to St. Joseph's Primary School, Newry.

My Name is Zofia and I am a Year 8 student in St. Mary's. When I was moving to secondary school, I was unsure of what to expect, I was nervous and anxious about the change, but once I started, I loved St. Mary's. I started to get the flow of school life and I've met many new people and made new friends. My favourite subject is Science; I love the experiments! I am a member of the Choir and the Cookery Club and I play both the Flute and the Piano. I have had a great first year in St. Mary's and I hope you will too.

Hollie's School Day

This is Hollie Gibney, she is in Year 8 and went to St. Clare's Abbey Primary School, Newry.



Hi, I'm Hollie, a student of St. Mary's High School in Year 8. I loved my primary school and I feel the same about St. Mary's. On my first day here at St. Mary's, I wasn't scared because I had lots of friends with me from both primary school and my football team. I love this school because of how kind the staff are. There are clubs to join to help you meet new people and feel part of the school. I joined the Gaelic, Netball and Athletics teams because I have a love for sports. Trust me when I say, you will love it here and you will make lots of new friends too.



Laoise's School Day

This is Laoise Keenan, she is in Year 8 and went to St. Malachy's Primary School, Newry.

My name is Laoise Keenan. I'm a Year 8 student here at St. Mary's High School, and a former student of St. Malachy's Primary School. I was nervous and scared at first starting St. Mary's, I didn't have many friends coming with me to secondary school but now I've made lots of new friends and I know the school like the back of my hand. I have joined the Choir and a number of sports teams, all the teachers have been kind and supportive throughout the year. You'll quickly come to love St. Mary's and settle in.



Guide to Year 8 Curriculum

In St. Mary's all students follow the N. Ireland Curriculum.

There are three aspects to the curriculum:

1. Areas of Learning (Subjects);
2. Cross Curricular Skills;
3. Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities;

Areas of Learning

All students study a range of subjects, some are a continuation from the Primary School curriculum, while others are new:

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| • Art & Design | • ICT |
| • Citizenship | • Irish |
| • Drama | • Mathematics |
| • Employability | • Music |
| • English | • Personal Development |
| • French | • Physical Education |
| • Geography | • Religious Education |
| • History | • Science |
| • Home Economics | • Technology and Design |

Cross - Curricular Skills

Each subjects develops important cross curricular skills, these skills help students to become an independent, lifelong learner, they include:

- Communication Development of language skills in all areas of the curriculum and in everyday situations
- Using Mathematics - Ability to apply knowledge and understanding of Mathematics throughout the curriculum and in everyday life
- Using ICT-Ability to handle and communicate information, solve problems and ask questions through the effective use of ICT in different contexts

Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities

These skills are developed across all subject areas and are essential for everyday life, education and work, they include:

- Managing Information e.g., recording and presenting information
- Thinking, Problem Solving and Decision Making e.g., making connections, generating possible solutions
- Being Creative e.g., experimenting with ideas
- Self-Management e.g., being aware of personal strengths and interests
- Working with Others e.g., group and peer work



Inside St Mary's

In Year 8, you will usually learn in a different classroom for each subject. These are some of the classrooms Year 8 students use.



This is the Fitness Suite.



This is one of the Science Labs.



This is the Art room.



This is one of the Home Economics rooms.



This is the Technology room.



This is the Music room.



This is one of the IT Suites.



St Mary's School Uniform

School Uniform Years 8 to 10



- Pink and white check blouse
- Maroon pleated skirt
- Maroon clip on tie
- Maroon jumper with school crest
- Maroon tights
- Summer blouse (Term 3)
- Flat black soft-soled shoes
- Maroon blazer with school crest
- A black coat with the school crest is available to purchase for £35 from the below link
<https://link.mfc-sports.com/teamwear/code/OZK0BB>

N.B All coats worn to school must be black

St Mary's PE Uniform

PE Uniform can be bought from O'Neill's in Newry

- Laced Trainers and Socks – supportive trainers with grip soles
- Black leggings with school crest or plain black leggings
- Half Zip **or** School Sweatshirt with school crest
- School PE Jersey
- Optional: - school shorts for Gaelic games and school skort for netball





Travelling to School

Bus Routes to Newry Bus Depot

Area	Bus Times
Banbridge Bus Station	07.40 / 08.16
Jonesborough Brennans Corner	08.35
Meigh Cross Roads	08.08 / 08.15
Camlough Post Office	08.22
Cloughoge	08.12
Hilltown, Main St Supermarket	08.13
Mayobridge Roundabout	08.20
Loughbrickland Mace Shop	07.46 / 08.22
Belleeks Post Office	08.10
Rathfriland Bus Depot	07.40
Bessbrook Charlemont Sq.	08.15
Warrenpoint Sq.	07.55 / 08.15

There are connecting buses from Newry Bus Depot to St Mary's Chapel at 08.35, 08.45 and 8.50
Going home from school Number 45 bus will drop students off at Stone Bridge – walk to Bus Depot

Contact: Bus Inspector (Newry Bus Centre) – 028 30263532

Contacting St Mary's

Parents/Carers are welcome to contact the main office if you wish to speak to your

Daughter's Form Teacher. Your daughters Form Teacher will then return your call at their earliest convenience.

As a parent you should not feel you are being over anxious by ringing the school and we encourage parents to discuss with the school any issues or concerns you may have.

Parents should also encourage their daughter to speak to their Form Teacher/Year Tutor or any member of staff she feels comfortable talking to, about any concerns she may be having.

Points of Contact

1. Form Teacher
2. Mrs A Hughes: Head of Year 8
3. Mrs F McCloy: Learning Support Coordinator (LSC)
4. Mr M Fitzpatrick: Vice Principal, Head of Pastoral Care, Designated Teacher for Child Protection

School Phone Number - 028 30262851

School Email – info@stmarys.newry.ni.sch.uk



Connecting from home

How to connect to the school App

Our main method of communication with parents/carers is through our School App. We are reducing the amount of paper we use, therefore most information is posted on the App. New Year 8 Students and their Parents/Carers can download our School App using the following links:

Google Play Store

https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.edtap.s_newry_st_marys&hl=en

App Store

<https://itunes.apple.com/ie/app/st-marys-high-school/id1113505428?mt=8>

Please set your profile by selecting the Year 8 student or parent group for the school year. The app enables the school to increase communication with students/parents/carers. You will receive regular updates and notifications from school.

How to log on to MySchool from home

To log on to MySchool from home

1. Go to www.c2kschools.net
2. Enter your school username and password

How to access student email from home

1. Go to www.c2kschools.net
2. Enter your school username and password
3. Go to Office365
4. Click on the outlook icon

How to Access Showbie

1. Download the Showbie app
2. Enter your username and password
3. Teachers will give you codes to join their classes

How to access Google Classroom

1. Go to www.c2kschools.net
2. Enter your school username and password
3. Click on the Google Classroom icon
4. Enter your Google Classroom details e.g username@c2ken.net and password
5. Or you can download the Google Classroom app and enter your login details
6. Teachers will give you codes to join their classes

Year 8 Calendar 2023-2024



Year 8 Activity Days	Monday 14 th and Tuesday 15 th August 2023 (10am-2pm)
Year 8 Induction Morning	Wednesday 23 rd August 2023 (9am-10.30am, PTM 10.30am – 12pm)
Term 1 starts	Friday 1 st September 2023
Staff Day	Friday 22 nd September 2023
Staff Day	Monday 9 th October 2023
Assessment 1	Week beginning Monday 16 th October 2023
Holidays	Monday 30 th October – Friday 3 rd November 2023
Staff Day	Monday 4 th December 2023
Parent Teacher Meeting	Friday 8 th December 2023 (online)
Assessment 2	Week beginning Monday 11 th December 2023
Holidays	Friday 22 nd December 2023 – Thursday 4 th January 2024
Staff Day	Friday 19 th January 2024
Staff Day	Friday 9 th February 2024
Holidays	Monday 12 th February – Friday 16 th February 2024
Assessment 3	Week beginning Monday 11 th March 2024
Holiday	Monday 18 th March 2024
Holidays	Friday 29 th March – Friday 5 th April 2024
Moderation Day	Friday 19 th April 2024
Bank Holiday	Monday 6 th May 2024
Bank Holiday	Monday 27 th May 2024
Assessment 4	Week beginning Monday 10 th December 2024

If changes have to be made to any of the dates parents will be notified in advance through the school app

Guide to Homework



At the start of the school year each student is given their own diary and will be encouraged to be independent learners and use their diary effectively to record all homework, attendance, school notices and keep a record of their Standardised Assessment Results.

Parents/Carers should check their daughter's diary regularly and sign it at the end of each week. Form Teachers will also check each student's diary weekly. Students are expected to record their Personalised Target Percentage for each subject in their diary together with the results of each Standardised Assessments.

Students are expected to record all homework in their diaries and complete homework to a high standard. There are a range of types of homework that may be given including: written; reading; learning; research and practical tasks. Homework is an essential element of learning, it consolidates work that has been undertaken in school and extends knowledge and understanding. Homework encourages Students to learn independently, developing important self-management skills.

Homework for Year 8 will not be excessive and therefore on occasions when there is not much homework, students should spend time looking over work done that day, spend time reading a book or reading over class notes.

We encourage our students to do their homework on the day it is given and at a regular time each day, maybe after a short break when getting home from school, so that the rest of the evenings are free. Students should do their homework away from distractions, devices and screens and in a quiet place. Parents should encourage their daughter to organise their school bags themselves each evening, ready for the next day's classes. While parents can offer help and advice with homework and organisation of books, parents should not do these tasks for them.

Positive Behaviour

St Mary's operates a positive behaviour system where students receive 'Achievement Points' for working hard and making a positive contribution to the life of the school. Rewards are given to students including: Student of the Month Award, Praise Postcards, vouchers, treats and Certificates. Behaviour points are given if a student does not follow the school rules. An after-school detention will be issued when 8 behaviour points have been awarded.

Assessments



Students undertake a number of assessments throughout the year where progress and attainment are closely monitored.

These assessments include:

- Class tests
- Projects and practical work
- Group activities
- Research tasks and reports
- Debates and presentations
- Standardised Assessments

Standardised Assessments

In each subject students will have an individual Personalised Target Percentage. This is based on their attainment in baseline assessment completed at the start of Year 8. Students will complete 4 Standardised Assessments in each subject throughout the year, (under exam conditions) and their performance in each is closely benchmarked against their Personalised Target.

The school will send reports home twice a year in December (short report) and June (long report) so that parents can see their daughter's progress.

Key Dates – Week beginning

Assessment 1 – 16th October 2023

Assessment 2 – 11th December 2023

Assessment 3 – 11th March 2024

Assessment 4 – 10th June 2024

8th December 2023 – Year 8 Parent Teacher Meeting (online)

Extra-Curricular



St Mary's hosts many after school and extra-curricular activities and groups throughout the year. We feel these are important to help students build friendship groups, build self-confidence and help with their mental health.

After School Dance Class



After School Numeracy Club



Literacy Club



Eco Committee



Gaelic Football



Netball



Green Space Project



After School Cooking



Choir



Fun Days & Events



At St Mary's we believe it is important to enjoy your school days and so alongside learning we also like to find time to have different activities and fun days throughout the year. We also have different charity events that the students will get involved in.

