

12 Courtenay Hill, Newry, Co Down, BT34 2EA
Phone: (028) 3026 2175

Good morning parents,

Seesaw:

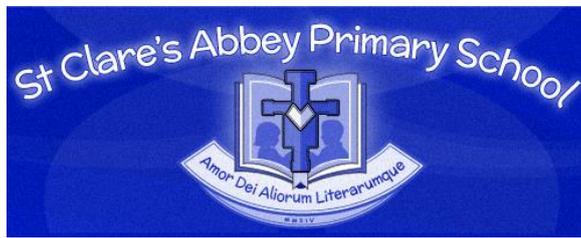
1. **Thank you** for working so well with us to get Seesaw fully up and running in all classes. This is crucial as teachers will be using it for home learning in the event of a class having to be quarantined due to a positive test result.

2. Some parents, whilst able to access Seesaw, have been **unable to upload photographs**, we have figured out that in most instances this is because 'access to photos' has not been enabled on the settings of the device being used eg phone, tablet. In several cases the parent specifically remembered enabling it, however as a **result of updates** it had been disabled and needed to be set again. Please try this, if you are struggling with this aspect of Seesaw. If you continue to have difficulties, please contact Mrs Mc Neaney in the school office, and she will arrange support.

3. You will see on your child's Seesaw page pieces of their own work uploaded (P3 – P7). The teachers are putting comments on this work on Seesaw rather than in the books themselves. To get maximum benefit out of the teachers' feedback it would be wonderful to have you look at the piece of work with your child and reinforce the area for improvement that the teacher is highlighting. That way it may have an impact. This is one of the strategies that I have asked the teachers to work on as I don't want them having excessive contact with pupils' books, marking as they previously would have. I actually think that this could be a great way for moving learning forward, as too often with our conventional way of marking, the teachers spend time providing feedback but quite often the children do not reflect on it and usually the parents do not see it, which can beg the question- what impact is it having? Hopefully this new approach will be of benefit to all. A little return comment from you and your child in response to the teacher would be greatly appreciated, if possible! This is only starting, so watch out for it each week from this point onwards.

Free School Meals (FSM) update:

1. Whilst I am aware that many of you have already completed application forms for Free School Meals, I have a feeling that many more of our families are entitled to do so. I would urge you to apply if eligible and I share one example of how it benefits our whole school community to have as many pupils claiming FSM as possible. I received notification from the Department of Education yesterday that I was allocated additional funding of just over **£8000** to employ a teacher for a few days over the course of the year to provide some teaching support to help narrow gaps arising from Covid 19 Lockdown period. Whilst pleased to receive it, had I had 28% of our pupils claiming Free School Meals, instead of 27.79% I would have been allocated over **£25,000** which would have allowed me to employ an additional teacher for a full year. This would have made a significant difference to provision, especially in some of our larger classes and I was so disappointed to lose out on the larger amount by such a tiny margin. Therefore, please, if entitled make the application. A lot of additional funding is allocated based on FSM figures so you are really helping school if you apply.



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2. I would like to point out to parents and carers that any child who receives FSM and is unable to attend school due to the following Covid 19 reasons:

- Being clinically vulnerable and in receipt of medical evidence indicating that they should refrain from school
- Having tested positive for coronavirus disease and consequently self- isolating
- Being required to self -isolate due to a member of their household having tested positive for coronavirus
- Quarantining as a consequence of coronavirus restrictions

will receive an offer of food provision for the period of absence. This will be a box of store cupboard ingredients to facilitate food preparation at home.

Parental questionnaires:

A questionnaire will be posted on each class Seesaw page next week. Its aim is to identify pupils who have coped well with 'Lockdown' and the current Covid context and those who have found it very challenging in terms of emotional well- being and school work. As we receive responses we will consider the best way of helping pupils who are struggling. It would be great to receive a high volume of responses, reflecting all experiences. Please look out for this.

Reminder:

School will be closed on Monday.

Best wishes to you all for the weekend and the week ahead.

Thank you sincerely,

Mrs Monaghan.