



NEWSLETTER

Dear Parents/Carers and friends of St. John Paul II,

I hope that everyone managed to find time to relax a little during the October Holiday. I know that by the end of the final week, the children and staff were ready for their holidays. I am sure you all feel the same pressure as our staff team does during these strange times. We are constantly wondering what will happen next!

Regardless - our first half term back at school was hugely successful and our school was a happy, hard working place. The children took to our new routines and procedures extremely well and I have to say it was just wonderful to see everyone happy to be back.

As you know, we began with a 'Recovery Curriculum', which gave the children a chance to gently ease back into the way of learning. As time has passed, we have increased the content of our curriculum, however, there is still a real focus on Literacy, Numeracy and Health & Wellbeing.

October is almost over and we will be heading into November fairly soon. Normally, after the October Holiday, our thoughts would be turning to our Parents as Partners events and the extra curricular activities around Halloween and Christmas. I will explain more about this within the Newsletter, but needless to say, things will certainly not be as they normally are. We are trying to find ways to ensure we mark all of these occasions in a safe but appropriate way.

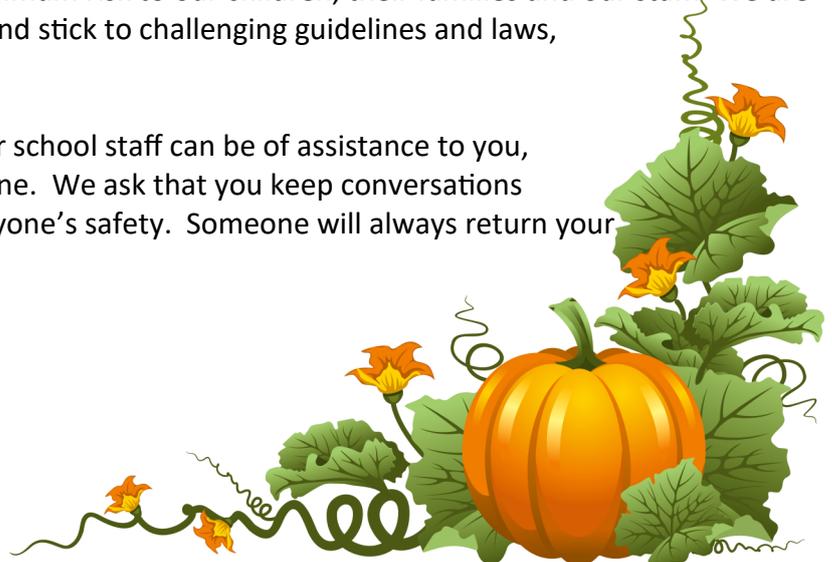
Your support in the coming weeks and months will be just as important as it has been during the re-opening of our school. Please do not forget how important our Parents/Carers are to the success and the positive ethos of our school. If you continue to be as proactive and supportive as you have been; if you continue to follow the guidance from the Government, from North Lanarkshire and from ourselves, then we will be able to safely operate with minimum risk to our children, their families and our staff. We are all being asked to make difficult choices and stick to challenging guidelines and laws, but with good reason.

As always, if I or any other member of our school staff can be of assistance to you, please do get in touch by email or by phone. We ask that you keep conversations at the school gate to a minimum for everyone's safety. Someone will always return your call or reply to an email.

With renewed good wishes,

Mr Thomas

Head Teacher



Some reminders as we continue our efforts to keep our school COVID-19 Free

Stay Safe | Stay Alert | Save Lives

KEEP A SAFE 2M DISTANCE WHEN DROPPING OFF AND COLLECTING CHILDREN
One Adult only (per family) should be within the school grounds.

OUR START AND FINISH TIMES STILL APPLY

Do not arrive at school before to your allocated time.
Make sure other family members know this if they take turns to do the school run!

PARK AWAY FROM THE SCHOOL

Our Car Parks and Laburnum Road are dangerously busy, especially at the end of the day.

MAKE SURE YOU USE THE ONE WAY SYSTEM FOR ENTERING AND EXITING

Some people continue to think that this arrangement does not apply to them!

DO NOT ENTER THE SCHOOL BUILDING WITHOUT AN APPOINTMENT

Do not wait inside the reception area. Call ahead and we will happily help!

ADULTS ARE BEING ENCOURAGED TO WEAR A FACE COVERING MORE OFTEN

You may want to consider wearing one at drop off and collection.
Any member of the public entering our building MUST wear a face covering.

If you or any of your household have any of the following symptoms

New persistent Cough | Loss of taste/smell | Fever

Your whole household should isolate...

10 days for the person with symptoms and 14 days for all others.

*If someone else develops symptoms, they must isolate for 10 days
(even if that takes them over the 14 day isolation period).*

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD CHILDREN ATTEND SCHOOL

If someone else in their household has symptoms or a positive test result or if you/they are considered a close contact of someone outwith their household through Test & Protect. Only identified contacts should isolate.

*If we continue to work together, we can ensure that our school
does not contribute to the spread of COVID-19*

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR COVID-SAFE FUN DAY!

As most of you will know, we held a Fun Day on the last day of term. This was HUGELY successful, not least from the reports and smiling faces of the children.

Thank you for all of the generous donations from our families and from our staff. Thank you for your financial support.

I wish to thank in particular, Mrs McDonnell and Mrs Bell who put so much thought and effort into things. However, a great number of our staff helped Mrs McDonnell and Mrs Bell to bring it all together as they worked behind the scenes to ensure the children have a fantastic day. It was a real team effort.

We really did not know what to expect, but the day was a great success and (despite missing things like St John Paul's Got Talent) we were all pleased with the outcome.



On the day, we raised a whopping £1500! This is an amazing amount and we will put this money (as we always do) towards things which all of our children will benefit from. Some of this will subsidise whatever Christmas celebrations and activities we can plan for.

Thank you once again for your support and generosity.

WE WELCOME SOME NEW FAMILIES TO OUR SCHOOL!

During the first term and over the past few weeks of the new term, we have welcomed 12 new children and their families to our school community. I know that the children are settling in well to their new school and we officially extend a warm welcome to everyone who has recently joined our St. John Paul II community.

It is always a lovely thing to welcome new people. I hope that they all feel the warmth of their welcome and wish them well in their new chapter!

Thank you to the children who had the responsibility of buddying our new children and showing them the ropes!



LIFECYCLE WORK CARRIED OUT DURING THE HOLIDAY

Many people comment about how new, fresh, clean and modern our school looks when they visit. This is due to the excellent work of Engie and the partnership they have with North Lanarkshire Council. Our school was part of the Public Private Partnership (PPP) contract which was a partnership NLC set up to renew and rebuild some of the school estate. As a PPP school, the fabric and many of the fixtures within the school are maintained and renewed as part of what we know as 'Lifecycle'. During the October Holiday, we had a lovely surprise whereby we were treated to a completely new and updated sound system in our Assembly Hall as well as a brand new and modern Stage Lights set up. Whilst we cannot stage any productions, we are well placed to do so in the future. Many of you know that we put all of these resources to good use and so these items are a welcomed improvement!

There are many other ongoing improvement carried out, for example, painting, re-carpeting and flooring, grounds maintenance and upkeep of the astroturf pitch to mention a few.

We are grateful that we have such a beautiful school and we should all play our part to keep it that way!

NOVEMBER INSET DAYS

You will have seen from the calendar of School Holidays in our September Newsletter, that we have our annual November INSET Day planned. However, you may remember that there is an outstanding By-election due to take place. This was planned for May 2020, but could not take place due to Lockdown. A new date has been set for this coming November and I was informed by North Lanarkshire Council that they school would be a Polling Station and permission was sought from the Scottish Government for a closure. This means that in November, our school will be closed to ALL PUPILS on the following days:

Monday 16th November Annual INSET Day.

Thursday 19th November INSET Day - By-election *St John Paul II will be a Polling Station.*

I realise that this is an additional day of closure for us, however, a number of the local school are in the same position and other avenues were explored by the council when considering the forthcoming election.

FEAST OF ST. JOHN PAUL II *22nd October*

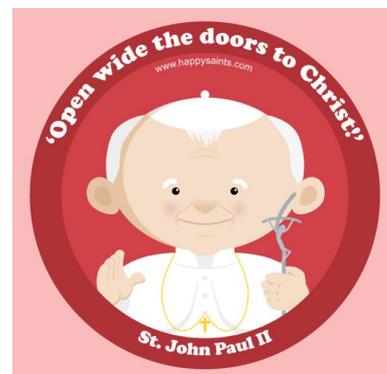
22nd October was the dedicated feast of our Patron St. John Paul II. Each year, this is the day we mark the patronage of our school and celebrate our annual Feast Day Mass in the school hall. This is always a beautiful Mass celebrated by Father Morris. It is an opportunity to rededicate our school community in Faith under the guidance of someone who is a modern-day Saint.

Unfortunately, we were not be able to celebrate Mass together. However, the children will take this opportunity to learn a little more about our Patron Saint and deepen their knowledge of him.

In the absence of Mass, we had following in place:

- ◆ We celebrated with Fr Morris and the whole school community by having an Prayer Service which was streamed on Teams.
- ◆ We had a special afternoon of Golden Time where classes could choose what they wanted to do to celebrate.

St. John Paul II; Pray for Us.



HALLOWEEN & CHRISTMAS 2020

As you are all aware, COVID-19 has meant that many of our annual events have either to be completely cancelled or completely re-thought! This is a challenge for us, as much of what makes our school such a happy place to be is the calendar of extra curricular and community events we hold each year within the school and with the support of our Parent Council.

HALLOWEEN - We will **not** be holding our annual Halloween Parade and we will **not** be asking the children to come to school in their costumes. We will mark Halloween with an Orienteering Treasure Hunt, a Best Joke Competition and each class having planned activities and fun. Each child will be given a special Halloween snack in the afternoon. Please do not send your child to school in their costume.

CHRISTMAS - We will not be able to hold our annual Christmas Nativity Concerts which P1-3 usually perform. Our Christmas Parties cannot go ahead as normal, but we will arrange something low-key for each class (but this will probably coincide with a Christmas Jumper Day so no party clothes necessary). We will also not be able to hold our annual Carol Service on the last day of term, which is a huge loss. I am currently working with our catering staff to plan how we hold our annual Christmas Lunch.

THE SPARK

The Spark is a counselling service which is used in various educational settings. I have recently received information about a free counselling service for Parents/Carers and Teachers. The free service is being funded by the Scottish Government and is accessible to all of our Parents/Carers.

It is recognised that, as well as the obvious challenges of dealing with the current pandemic situation, families are under other pressures and strains. I encourage you to make use of this service by calling **0800 802 2088** during opening hours (see below) or go to www.thespark.org.uk for further information.

- Monday: 9am – 9pm
- Tuesday: 9am – 9pm
- Wednesday: 9am – 9pm
- Thursday: 9am – 9pm
- Friday: 9am – 4pm
- Saturday/Sunday: closed
- Sunday: closed



PLEASE CONTINUE TO BE VIGILANT!

Report anything suspicious when you see it!

We continue to be concerned about the number of young people hanging around the school grounds in the evenings, at weekends and during the holidays. Whilst the majority (most of whom are current or former pupils) simply want to play football on the pitch, others are more concerned with vandalism and climbing dangerous areas within the grounds. Since our last newsletter, we have experienced...

- ◆ People burning the surface of the AstroTurf Pitch
- ◆ People climbing onto the structures at the back of the school
- ◆ People breaking the fence which leads to/from Heather Gardens
- ◆ People finding a way to climb onto the top of the school roof.

Climbing onto the roof is of particular concern! There is serious risk of injury and even loss of life. If you know that your child is spending time within the school grounds, please speak with them to ensure they are being safe and that they are not involved in any anti-social behaviour. Thank you!

CONGRATUATIONS TO OUR P5 FIRST COMMUNICANTS!

We were delighted to be able to celebrate with some of the young parishioners of St. Gabriel's Parish recently, when they made their First Holy Communion. Whilst this was a very different event than it would normally be, many of the families have commented on how simple, prayerful and intimate a Mass it ended up being.



This is in no small way down to everyone involved in the preparation as well as Father Morris, our children and their families. Thank you for your part in this!

We look forward to the celebrating the same with those children in P5 who are young parishioners of St. Columba's! The work is progressing well with the renovations and we will keep in touch with Fr Bogan so that we can plan ahead for the remainder of our P5 First Communicants.

WIFI UPGRADE

Throughout the last few months, some extensive work has been carried out within the school to upgrade our current Wi-Fi provision. This is more complicated than it sounds in a large campus such as ours! Much of the work had to be completed during late night shifts and holidays and most of it is not very visible to the staff and children.

The work has now been completed and this has provided us with much better and more reliable coverage and connectivity in all areas of our school building. This gives us better flexibility for Learning and Teaching and allows lots of our devices to be used almost anywhere in the building. Our Wi-Fi continues to be protected and it promotes internet safety for all users.



PARENT COUNCIL HALLOWEEN RAFFLE

The Parent Council are running a raffle for the children in the run up to Halloween. You may remember me telling you that the funds raised from last year were used to part-fund the three new Interactive Screens. They are looking to continue to keep their own funds as healthy as possible so that they can help subsidise further initiatives in school. Tickets on sale from **Monday 26th October**.

St John Paul II Parent Council

HALLOWEEN Raffle

Draw 30th October

3 Spooktastic Prizes to be won

Tickets
£1

Tickets sold in school. Correct change please.



EPIC ONLINE READING RESOURCE

Many of our classes are using Epic as a way to promote home reading as well as in class. Accessing Epic has changed.

Epic School is still free to use between the hours 7am and 4pm Monday - Friday.

After 4pm Epic will ask for a parent to sign in using their email address. This will unlock **Epic Free**, which allows pupils to continue to access the books selected by their teacher.

Each pupil has 2 hours worth of free reading time per week on **Epic Free**.

To sign in right- click on the Epic! hyperlink below and use the class code to access the books set by the teacher.

[Epic!](#)

Happy reading!

SCHOOL MEAL COST & LUNCH TIME CROSSING PATROLS

We recently posted information on our School Blog (website) which indicated that from the end of October, the cost of a School Meal will rise to £3.

We also posted a letter from NLC indicating that there will now no longer be a lunch time crossing patrol. At this time, we are discouraging children from going home for lunch where possible. However, if they must go home, it is the responsibility of Parents/Carers to ensure the safety of children as they make their way home and return to school.

These letters are available from our website within the NEWS section in the LETTERS section.





Our Nursery children continue to cope well with all of the new routines and we have enjoyed welcoming our new children over the last few weeks. Our staff team continue to work hard to ensure that our Nursery Class is a safe environment for our children to learn, thrive and develop within. The re-introduction of 1140 hours has been a great success and we are glad to see so many of our families making such good use of their allocated hours. Within this section, you will find some 'Nursery-specific' information.

FRIDAY 30TH OCTOBER—HALLOWEEN

Staff have planned a fun, busy day of activities and lots of different experiences. As with the school, children should NOT come to Nursery in their Halloween costumes. They can wear Halloween colours or a Halloween t-shirt but they can also just come in their normal nursery clothes.

In the morning we will have our Room on the Broom Walk—this will be a sponsored event to raise nursery funds. Sponsor forms will have been issued.

WEEKLY DONATIONS

Thank you to everyone who has been able to make their weekly donations of £1. These donations are much appreciated and we certainly put them to good use!

Your donations contribute towards things like our daily snack (which the Nursery has no allocated budget for and the school otherwise subsidises).

OUTDOOR CLOTHING

Children are outdoors every day. It is important that their clothing is appropriate especially not that the weather is changing. If possible, we ask that the children bring a pair of wellies and a waterproof.

We have a stock of outdoor clothing in the Nursery, but because of COVID, we cannot allow the children to share these.

WHEN YOUR CHILD IS UNWELL

Obviously, we are all super conscious about COVID-19 symptoms and if your child or anyone in your household has any one of the symptoms they should not attend Nursery. However, at this time of year, children can become unwell with other bugs and infections. This is par for the course! We ask that, if your child is genuinely unwell, you ensure that they take an appropriate length of time to recover at home and that they do not attend Nursery. This ensures we don't pass bugs on to staff and other children. Many thanks for your support with this matter!

DROP OFF AND COLLECTION OF CHILDREN

Please continue to arrive at your allocated time, using the one way entry and exit gates. **Cones have been put in place to ensure that you maintain 2m safe distance from other families.** Please remember:

- ◆ Once you have dropped off/collected your child, move away from the gate.
- ◆ Only remain within the grounds if you are collecting another child.
- ◆ Try not to approach staff with queries at the gate where possible. When talking to staff, you should wear a face mask.

LEARNING THEMES

We are coming to the end of our 'friendships' learning context. Children have been learning and enjoying the story of Elmar.

Our next learning context will be 'The Three Little Pigs' as many of the children have been enjoying the story. Lots of the experiences and activities the children will be participating in will be based on that context. As always, the children will continue to have a say in what path our learning goes down!

PUPIL CONSULTATIONS

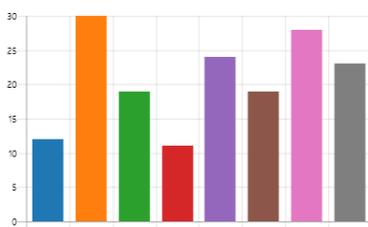
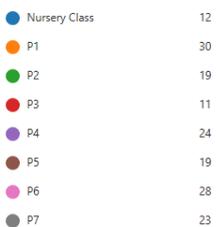
Consultations will take place by phone on Monday 2nd and Tuesday 3rd November. Times will be allocated but if yours does not suit, then please let our Nursery staff know.

HOMEWORK & DIGITAL LEARNING SURVEY

Many thanks to everyone who completed our online survey regarding Homework, Home Learning and Digital Learning. We are delighted that so many took the time to complete this survey. The views of around 126 of our families are represented in the results, which is a very good indicator.

2. I have children in the following stages

[More Details](#)

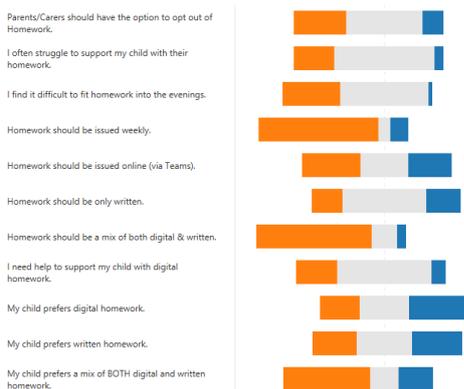


We had representation for ALL stages within our school. This gives us a good cross section of opinion!

3. Please answer the following with your opinion

[More Details](#)

Agree Disagree Don't Know

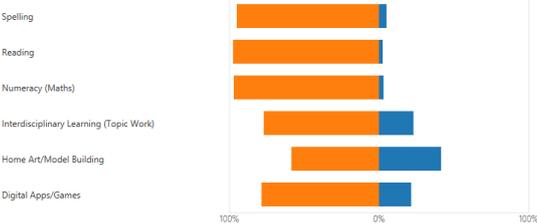


You can see from Question 3 around 35% felt that homework should be optional with 65% of Parents/Carers feeling it shouldn't. Whilst the majority want homework, Parents/Carers always have the option of stating a preference. After all, what is the point of work being prepared and resources being sent home if it is never to be returned? This is a waste to Teachers' time and school resources. We respect the right of Parents/Carers to choose NOT to participate in homework, but would ask you to inform us of this.

4. I think homework should consist of the following...

[More Details](#)

Agree Disagree



In Question 4 it is abundantly clear that Parents/Carers prefer there to be a variety of tasks provided as part of homework. More practical tasks seem to be less popular (for example modelling and art!) but we understand why this is the case. It sometimes ends up being the adult who is left with the majority of the work!

5. Would you like your child to receive homework?

[More Details](#)

Yes No



87% of Parents/Carers said they would like homework for their child(ren) and 13% said no. This comes down to personal situations and family arrangements and we will respect the decision of each family.

The majority of respondents have Home Broadband in place. However, 14% are relying on data allowance on theirs or someone else's phone. This is not ideal for those families.

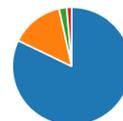
Whilst the majority of children have their own device at home, just less than half are sharing or do not have one at all.

We can see that the most Parents/Carers are aware that their children have access to GLOW, Sumdog and Microsoft Teams. Through your child's GLOW account, they can download a free version of Microsoft Office. We will work to raise awareness of all available digital platforms we are using and provide some training.

7. Do you have home internet access to allow your child to access Digital Learning? Which source to you rely upon? (Choose all relevant options)

[More Details](#)

Home Broadband 120
Data allowance on phone/tablet... 21
Other kind of internet access 3
I do not have home internet a... 2



8. Do you have sufficient devices at home to support Digital Learning? (Choose all relevant options)

[More Details](#)

My child has their own laptop... 72
My child uses a shared device ... 15
My child has to share a parent... 35
I do not have access to a lapto... 12



9. I know that my child has access to the following:

[More Details](#)

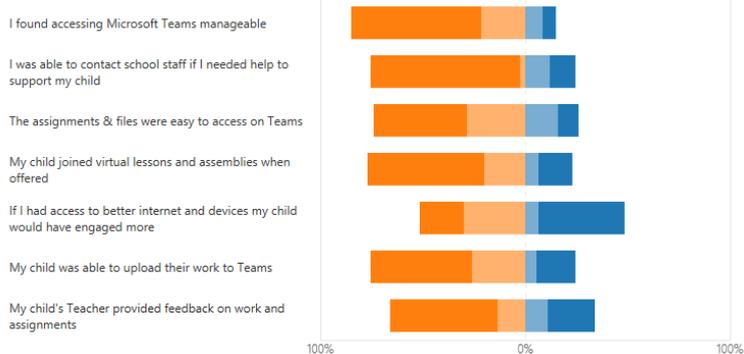
Glow 120
Microsoft Teams 100
Microsoft Office 365 40
Sumdog 105
Active Learn 31



10. Question

[More Details](#)

Agree Disagree Don't Know Not applicable



- The vast majority of people found accessing Teams manageable (63%) however some people (23%) did not! We want to offer more support with this, as Microsoft Teams and Digital Learning will still continue to be part of things going forward.

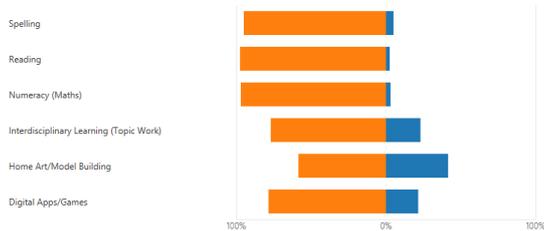
- 73% of people were able to get in touch with us if they needed support. This is great, but we want to be there to support 100% of our families!

- More than half of respondents were joining in with digital lessons and assemblies. The majority were able to upload work to Teams, but again, this needs more support.
- Over 50% of people said that Teachers provided feedback. This percentage is lower than we would expect as every Teacher was online daily and commented on posts from the children. We obviously need to ensure this feedback is more evident going forward.
- 87% of Parents/Carers said they would like homework for their child(ren) and 13% said no. This comes down to personal situations and family arrangements and we will respect the decision of each family.

4. I think homework should consist of the following...

[More Details](#)

Agree Disagree



- The majority of respondents have Home Broadband in place. However, 14% are relying on data allowance on theirs or someone else's phone. This is not ideal for those families.

- Whilst the majority of children have their own device at home, just less than half are sharing or do not have one at all.

- We can see that the most Parents/Carers are aware that their children have access to GLOW, Sumdog and Microsoft Teams. Through your child's GLOW account, they can download a free version of Microsoft Office. We will work to raise awareness of all available digital platforms we are using and provide some training.

5. Would you like your child to receive homework?

[More Details](#)

Yes 110
No 16



- The final question was for any general comments people wanted to add. All comments were constructive with

the vast majority saying they found the experience positive. However, there were comments around not knowing how to access things, not having suitable devices and also issues for families who have more than one child or where the parent/carer was working from home and having to share a device with school children. Some great comments were offered around what kinds of homework is preferred and what Parents/Carers find frustrating. Thanks for all of the positive comments about our school and our staff team!

FROM YOUR RESPONSES...

- ✓ **Revise and issue our Home Learning Policy.**
- ✓ **Offer tutorials and support to help Parents/Carers with Teams/sumdog/etc..**
- ✓ **Ensure that there is a balance of homework with flexibility for families in what is done and when it has to be handed in.**
- ✓ **Seek support for families who do not have the required devices or internet access.**

SCHOOL HOLIDAY ARRANGEMENTS FOR NORTH LANARKSHIRE 2020/21



November 2020

In-service day: Monday 16 Nov 2020

In-service day: Thursday 19 Nov 2020 *Local by-election. School used as Polling Station.*

December 2020 - January 2021

Christmas and New Year Holidays: Wednesday 23 December 2020 to Tuesday 5 January 2021 (inclusive)

School closes at 2:30pm

February 2021

Mid-term break: Monday 8 February 2021 and Tuesday 9 February 2021

In-service Day: Wednesday 10 February 2021

School closes at 3pm on Friday 5th February 2020.

April 2021

Friday 2 April 2021 to Friday 16 April 2021 (Inclusive)

(Good Friday 2 April 2021 and Easter Monday 5 April 2021)

School closes at 2:30pm on Thursday 1st April.

May 2021

May Day holiday: Monday 3 May 2021 In-service day: Thursday 6 May 2021

May weekend holiday: Friday 28 May 2021 and Monday 31 May 2021

June 2021

School closes: Thursday 24 June 2021 at 1pm



St. John Paul II Primary School & Nursery

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Faith | Respect | Friendship | Trust | Kindness | Equality