



St. Mary's High School

Newry

Year 8

Transition Guide



Contents



2	Principal's Welcome
3	Year Tutor's Welcome
4	Vice Principal's & Head Girl's Welcome
5	The School Day
6	Year 8 Stories
7	Guide to Year 8 Curriculum
8	Where You Learn
9	School Uniform
10	Travelling to School & Contacting St. Mary's
11	Connecting From Home
12	Year 8 Calendar
13	Guide to Homework
14	Assessments
15	Extra-Curricular Activities
16	Fun Days and Events

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 Transition 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 may 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, our 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 different Student Voice Groups and taking part in the many extra-curricular and sporting activities offered.

I am very confident that you will enjoy each day at school and will be proud to be a St. Mary's student.

Best Wishes

Mr M Fitzpatrick

Vice Principal

Katie Havern - Head Girl



A very warm welcome to all the new Year 8 students who are joining St. Mary's in September 2024. I am delighted to have been recently elected as Head Girl of St. Mary's High School. I have loved every minute of my time in school, and I can remember the mix of excitement and apprehension I felt when I first joined St. Mary's in September 2018.

Moving from primary to secondary school can be a very exciting and yet anxious time, but rest assured you will quickly settle in and become a proud 'St. Mary's girl', just like me. You will soon make many new friends and the teachers in St. Mary's will provide you with so much support and help, especially your new Form Teacher. Other students within the school will help you if you ever get lost around the school, so please do not worry and always ask for help when you need it.

In St. Mary's, you will receive many opportunities to join a range of Student Voice groups, sporting and extra-curricular groups. From my own personal experience, I would advise you to really get involved in the life of our school. Join as many groups as you can, as you will meet new friends and make many happy memories! I really hope you all love St. Mary's as much as I do. I look forward to meeting you all in September and wish you every success in your new school.

The School Day



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

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

8:55 a.m.-9:15 a.m.	Assembly/Registration - Period 1
9:15 a.m.-10:00 a.m.	Period 2
10:00 a.m.-10:45 a.m.	Period 3
10:45 a.m.-11:30 a.m.	Period 4
11:30 a.m.-12:05 p.m.	Period 5
*12:05 p.m.-12:45 p.m.	Lunch - Period 6
*12:50 p.m.-1:30 p.m.	Period 7
1:30 p.m.-2:15 p.m.	Period 8
2:15 p.m.-3:00 p.m.	Period 9

St. Mary's operates a Biometric System for the school canteen.

Students will be given information in August on how to use the system.

*KS3 Lunchtime – 12:05 p.m. – 12:45 p.m.

*KS4 Lunchtime – 12:50 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

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 number/home telephone number** where parents/carers may be contacted during the day or in the case of an emergency.



Karlie's School Experience

This is Karlie Kennedy. She is in Year 8 and went to St. Joseph's Primary School, Newry.

My Name is Karlie and I am a Year 8 student. When I was moving from primary school I was very nervous. I didn't know what to expect, but once I started St. Mary's I knew that I had made the right choice. The teachers and staff are lovely and caring. My favourite subjects are Maths and PE. I enjoy problem solving and learning about new sports and how to play them. I am involved in many after school activities such as Gaelic football, camogie and dance. I have had an amazing first year in St. Mary's and have made great memories. You will too!

Phoebe's School Experience

This is Phoebe Galbraith. She is in Year 8 and went to St. Clare's Abbey Primary School, Newry.



Hi, my name is Phoebe and I went to St Clare's Abbey Primary School. I loved my primary school and everything my teachers did for me. When I was moving to St. Mary's I felt excited but also nervous. I very quickly settled into my new school. My favourite subject is PE and I love all the sports activities here. I attend many after school activities including dance, cookery and the science club. They are all so much fun and I learn many new things. I have had an amazing year in Year 8 and have made many new friends. I am sure you will also.



Ella's School Experience

This is Ella Black. She is in Year 8 and went to St. Malachy's Primary School, Newry.

My name is Ella and I am a Year 8 student. When I first started St. Mary's in September 2023, I was so excited because my friends were starting also. All the staff in St. Mary's are fantastic. They really made me feel at home in my new school. St. Mary's is a wonderful school, you will be studying many new subjects and the sporting activities are amazing. Once you start St. Mary's you will quickly come to love it, just like I do.

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

Cross - Curricular Skills

Each subject 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 their knowledge and understanding of Mathematics throughout the curriculum and in everyday life.
- Using IT- Ability to handle and communicate information, solve problems and ask questions through the effective use of IT 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.



Where You Learn

In Year 8 you will 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 box pleated skirt
- Maroon clip on tie
- Maroon jumper with school crest
- Maroon tights
- Flat black soft-soled shoes
- Maroon blazer with school crest
- Term 3 (Optional) – Summer blouse and socks
- A black coat with the school crest is available to purchase for £35 from the link below
<https://link.mfc-sports.com/teamwear/code/0ZK0BB>

N.B All coats worn to school must be black

St. Mary's PE Uniform

PE Uniform can be bought from O'Neills in Newry

- Laced Trainers and Socks – supportive trainers with grip soles (no Converse, Vans, Nike Airforce)
- 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 Square	08:15
Warrenpoint Square	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 they wish to speak to their daughter's Form Teacher. Your daughter's Form Teacher will then return your call at their earliest convenience.

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

Parents/carers 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: Year Tutor
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 and school reports are posted on the School App.

New Year 8 Students and their parents/carers can download the 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 2024-2025



Year 8 Activity Days	Tuesday 13 th and Wednesday 14 th August 2024 (10 a.m.- 2 p.m.)
Year 8 Induction Morning	Friday 30 th August 2024 (9 a.m. -10:30 a.m., Parent Teacher Meeting 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.)
Term 1 Starts	Monday 2 nd September 2024
Staff Day	Friday 20 th September 2024
Staff Day	Monday 14 th October 2024
Assessment 1	Week beginning Monday 14 th October 2024
Holidays	Monday 28 th October – Friday 1 st November 2024
Staff Day	Friday 29 th November 2024
Parent Teacher Meeting	Friday 6 th December 2024 (9.30 a.m. - 11.30 a.m.)
Assessment 2	Week beginning Monday 9 th December 2024
Holidays	Monday 23 rd December 2024 – Friday 3 rd January 2025
Staff Day	Friday 17 th January 2025
Staff Day	Friday 7 th February 2025
Holidays	Monday 10 th February – Friday 14 th February 2025
Assessment 3	Week beginning Monday 10 th March 2025
Holiday	Monday 17 th March 2025
Moderation Day	Wednesday 16 th April 2025
Holidays	Friday 18 th April – Friday 25 th April 2025
Bank Holiday	Monday 5 th May 2025
Bank Holiday	Monday 26 th May 2025
Assessment 4	Week beginning Monday 9 th June 2025

If changes have to be made to any of the dates parents/carers 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. They 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. Students are expected to record their Personalised Target Percentage for each subject in their diary together with the results of each Standardised Assessment.

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 written homework, students should spend time looking over work done that day, spend time reading a book or reading over class notes or making their own revision notes and aids.

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/ carers should encourage their daughter to organise their school bags themselves each evening, ready for the next day's classes. While parents/carers can offer help and advice with homework and organisation of books, they should not do these tasks for the students.

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 assessments 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/carers can monitor their daughter's progress.

Key Dates – Week beginning

Assessment 1 – 14th October 2024

Assessment 2 – 9th December 2024

Assessment 3 – 10th March 2025

Assessment 4 – 9th June 2025

6th December 2024 – Year 8 Parent Teacher Meeting (9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.)

Extra-Curricular Activities



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 types of activities and fun days throughout the year. We also have a range of charity events that our students get involved in.

