



12th August 2026

Letter re 2026/27 school year

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to you to provide information ahead of the 2026/27 school year.

1. Calendar for 2026/27

The school calendar for next year, 2026/27, is enclosed and begins on pg. 6 of this letter.

2. Return to school 2026/27

The school calendar specifies the return date for students in each year group which commences on Thursday 27th August 2026.

- 1st Year- Thursday 27th August 2026
- 2nd Year, 3rd Year, 5th Year and 6th Year- Friday 28th August 2026
- Transition Year- Monday 31st August 2026

3. No Nut and Sesame Policy

The school is now implementing a policy that prohibits nuts and sesame on the school premises. The reason for this is that a student in the school has an allergy to these products. All students and staff will be expected to adhere to this new policy, and The Food Village has been modified to remove all nuts and sesame from it. Any nuts or sesame that are found to be on the premises will be confiscated and disposed of immediately. All parents/guardians, students and staff are asked to ensure that this policy is adhered to as the consequences can be serious for students with allergies.

4. Science Laboratory Refurbishments- Climate Action Summer Works Scheme

Work has commenced on refurbishing the school's three science labs over the summer. The work is being funded by the Department of Education's Climate Action Summer Works Scheme which the school successfully applied to in the summer of 2025. The refurbishment work will continue during term one, up to Christmas, and is scheduled to be completed in early January 2027. While this is a very significant development for the science facilities in our school, the school will be implementing new procedures with students and staff at certain times during the first term to manage the refurbishments. This will include measures such as one-way systems for moving around the school, alternative rooms for science classes during the refurbishment works and other temporary arrangements as required.

5. Parking

Please note that car parking on site is for school staff only. Therefore, parents/guardians and students cannot park inside the school grounds. There are also double yellow lines outside of the school and therefore cars should not be parked on those at any time.

The school carpark has also been relined during the summer, with pedestrian walkways now lined out inside the school carpark. Students are asked to use the pedestrian gates which are located at both entrances to the school and to use the walkways in the staff carpark when walking to and from school.

6. School Books Scheme for 2026/27

The national school book scheme will continue for 2026/27. Under this scheme, all students in 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 5th and 6th Year will receive their schoolbooks and core classroom resources for each of their subjects. Students in TY will also receive some core classroom resources.

The scheme is also used to provide students with core classroom resources which includes one school journal, copybooks (12 at Junior Cycle, 4 for TY students and 16 at Senior Cycle), one A4 display folder per student, one plastic zip A4 folder/carry case, maths formulae and tables, Maths set and calculator (First Year only). Exam papers for exam years are also covered under the scheme. It should be noted that additional copybooks above and beyond what is referenced here falls outside of the remit of the scheme.

Parents/Guardians are advised that the schoolbooks, calculators and Maths sets remain the property of St. Mary's Secondary School. Students and their parents/guardians will be required to sign a policy, via the school app, at the beginning of the 2026/27 school year regarding this. All books are labelled and scanned into an IT system to allow the school to keep track of all books issued to each individual student.

Finally, St. Mary's will charge a €50 deposit to First and Fifth Years as part of the book scheme. This will be returned to parents/guardians at the end of Third Year for Junior Cycle students and Sixth Year for Senior Cycle students when all books are returned to the school.

7. Administration Fee

The administration Fee will remain at €130 for the 2026/27 school year. This fee includes locker rental, photocopying, printing, postage, fees associated with online payments through the school app and administration of IT systems which includes VS Ware and the school app.

8. School Tracksuit for Physical Education & Sporting Events

Parents/Guardians are reminded that students should only wear their school PE tracksuit for PE classes and other sporting events when representing the school. This is provided by Cobi Sports.

9. Medical Updates

Parents/guardians are reminded to forward any updated medical information that they wish for the school to be aware of to the school. Please note this can be done via the school app. If parents/guardians wish to do so, they can arrange to speak with a member of senior management to discuss any such information further. Please note all information is treated with the strictest confidence.

10. Supervised Evening Study

Supervised evening study will resume on Monday 7th September 2025. The costs for this are set out on the next page. There have been no increases for evening study for 2026/27. Please note that evening study can only operate once a minimum number of students sign up.

As was the case in 2025/26, students who sign up to evening study will be signing up for the four days. Attendance will be taken at each study session.

To assist parents/guardians with costs, the school year has been divided into five different terms with each term having its own set cost. This is a total of €300 which is the same as the past two years. Please note that adherence to the payment deadline is important as this informs the school if it can achieve the minimum number required. Where parents/guardians have more than one child who wishes to do evening study, please contact the school directly.

Evening Study	Cost	Payment deadline date
Term 1: 7 th September-23 rd October (7 weeks)	€70	Wednesday 2 nd September
Term 2: 2 nd November-18 th December (7 weeks)	€70	Wednesday 21 st October
Term 3: 11 th January- 12 th February (5 weeks)	€50	Wednesday 6 th January
Term 4: 22 nd February-19 th March (4 weeks)	€40	Wednesday 10 th February
Term 5: 5 th April – 28 th May (8 weeks)	€70	Thursday 18 th March

11. Mobile Phones

The school continues to implement the mobile phone policy which has successfully balanced students being able to access their phone for educational purposes with students also not being distracted by phone usage.

To support this policy, the school has now procured mobile phone pouches which will be provided to students when they return to school. Each student will be required to place their mobile phone in the pouch that is provided for the duration of the school day.

This means that students will not be able to receive phone calls or text messages during the school day. Parents/Guardians are advised to phone the school office (067-31450) if they need to get a message to their child.

12. Lockers

Students are reminded to bring a padlock for their locker. Lockers will be assigned by Year Heads when students return to school at the end of August.

13. Submitting absence notes and permission to leave notes- 4pm cut off

In advance of the 2026/27 school year, parents/guardians are reminded about the importance of submitting absence notes, late notes and permission to leave notes via the school app.

- Absence notes should be submitted as soon as is practicable on the day that your child is absent.
- Late notes must be submitted by 4pm on the day that your child is late- otherwise it is recorded as an unexplained late. An accumulation of three unexplained late attendance records results in a lunchtime detention for students.
- Permission to leave notes must be submitted by 8.30am on the morning of the day when your child has to leave. This is to allow Year Heads to approve the leave note before they start classes for the day.

14. Students signing out during the school day

Where a student needs to sign out during the school day, please note that students in Junior Cycle (1st to 3rd Year) must be collected from the front reception area by a parent/guardian. Students in Senior Cycle (TY, 5th & 6th Year) do not have to be collected by a parent/guardian if parents/guardians consent to this.

Permission to leave notes must be submitted as set out at point 12 above for all students. It is requested that, insofar as possible, appointments are scheduled outside of school time.

15. Online Information Sessions- Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle- October 2026

Given that there are significant changes to assessments happening at Senior Cycle level and a variety of assessments at Junior Cycle level, two separate online information sessions for parents/guardians and students will be facilitated in October. One will be for Senior Cycle and one for Junior Cycle. The date(s) and times will be communicated to parents/guardians in early September.

16. Uniform

Please note that the school uniform is set out as follows:

Junior Students (1st-3rd Year)	Senior Students (TY-6th Year)
• Royal Blue V-neck pullover with long sleeves and crest inset • Choice of knee length royal blue skirt inverted pleat and knife pleat on either side at the front and plain back or Grey Hunter Brand high rise trousers (only)- full length • White shirt • School jacket- royal blue college jacket from Solo Form (previous blue jacket for 2nd and 3rd Years only). Please note a school jacket is mandatory for all students • Stockings: black, grey or white socks (unbranded) or black tights	• Black senior V-neck pullover with long sleeves and crest inset • Choice of knee length royal blue skirt inverted pleat and knife pleat on either side at the front and plain back or plain black Hunter Brand high rise trousers (only)- full length • White shirt • School jacket- royal blue college jacket from Solo Form or previous blue school jacket. Please note a school jacket is mandatory for all students • Stockings: black, grey or white socks (unbranded) or black tights • Footwear: low heeled black shoes or black or navy decks acceptable

• Footwear: low heeled black shoes or black or navy decks acceptable • Runners are not allowed unless for PE/Clubs.	• Runners are not allowed unless for PE/Clubs.
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Please note that only the official PE uniform may be worn for the full duration of the day when students have PE. Therefore, students who do not have the full school PE uniform must come to school in their standard uniform and change into their PE clothes for PE class. Students will then change back into the school uniform after PE. Students who are wearing the PE uniform may wear the PE uniform for the full duration of the school day.

In addition to the information above, I wish to make you aware of the following with regards to the colder weather in winter:

1. Students are permitted to wear body warmers underneath their school uniform, but any bodywarmer must not be visible above a student's shirt/jumper
2. Students will be permitted to wear a grey or black scarf in in the school building, including in classes. The only exception to this may be where a teacher may request scarves to be removed in specific practical classes for health and safety reasons; for example in Home Economics, Science or Technology where a student may be using equipment.
3. Students must wear the official St. Mary's School jacket.
4. Students are asked to remove hats inside the school building.
5. Students are not permitted to wear leggings as part of their uniform. Students are permitted to wear tights underneath the official school skirt.
6. Hot water bottles are not permitted in the school under any circumstances, as they pose a very significant health and safety risk.

17. School Office

The school office has reopened this morning and will be in operation from 9am to 4pm until Wednesday 26th August. From the 27th August onwards it will be open from 8.30am to 4pm daily.

Yours faithfully,



John Cullinane
Principal

School Calendar- 2026/27

August/September	
Thursday 27 th August	▫ First Years in School (9am-12.35pm)
Friday 28 th August	▫ First, Second, Third, Fifth and Sixth years in school (9am - 12.35pm)
Monday 31 st August	▫ TY Induction (9am-12.35pm) ▫ All other classes on normal timetable (9am-12.35pm)
Tuesday 1 st September	▫ All classes on normal timetable (9am-4pm)
Friday 25 th September	▫ School closed
Wednesday 24 th September	▫ Mercy Feast Day
October	
Monday 19 th October	▫ Sixth Year Parent-Teacher meeting 4.15pm-6.45pm (school finishes at 3.45pm)
Friday 23 rd October	▫ School closes for mid-term break at 3.20pm
November	
Monday 2 nd November	▫ School reopens following mid-term break
Tuesday 10 th November	▫ Third Year Parent-Teacher meeting 4.15pm-6.45pm (school finishes at 3.45pm)
Monday 16 th November	▫ School closed for staff training day
Thursday 19 th November	▫ Open Evening for prospective First Year students- 6.30pm
Friday 20 th November	▫ School closed
December	
Monday 7 th December	▫ Fifth Year Parent-Teacher meeting 4.15pm-6.45pm (school finishes at 3.10pm)
Tuesday 15 th December	▫ School closed for staff training day
Tuesday 22 nd December	▫ Christmas Holidays 12.35pm
January	
Wednesday 6 th January	▫ School re-opens following Christmas Holidays
Tuesday 19 th January	▫ First Year Parent-Teacher meeting 4.15pm-6.45pm (school finishes at 3.45pm)

Friday 29 th January	▫ Start of pre-examinations (mock exams) for Third and Sixth-Year students
February	
Monday 1 st February	▫ School closed for February Bank Holiday
Friday 15 th February	▫ School closes for February Mid-Term Break at 3.20pm
Monday 22 nd February	▫ School reopens following mid-term break ▫ Second Year & Transition Year Parent-Teacher Meeting 4.15-6.45pm (School finishes at 3.10pm)
March	
Wednesday 17 th March	▫ School closed for St. Patrick's Day
Friday 19 th March	▫ School closes for Easter Holidays at 3.20pm
April	
Monday 5 th April	▫ School reopens following Easter Holidays
May	
Monday 3 rd May	▫ School closed for May Bank Holiday
Tuesday 4 th May	▫ School closed
Tuesday 18 th May	▫ School Sports Day
Monday 24 th May	▫ 6 th Year Graduation
Friday 28 th May	▫ Summer Exams for First, Second and Fifth-Year students
June	
Friday 4 th June	▫ Conclusion of exams for First, Second and Fifth Year
Wednesday 9 th June	▫ Start of State Examinations LC, LCA and JC

Please note: School Management reserve the right to change the above dates if the need arises. As per Department of Education and Youth Circular 0018/2026, scheduled holidays in February may be adjusted if the need arises due to loss of days in adverse weather. Those Contingency Days are set as follows for the 2026/27 school year:

- 15th February 2027
- 16th February 2027
- 17th February 2027

The annual plan for dealing with unforeseen school closures is scheduled to be reviewed by the Board of Management at the end of August and, once ratified, this will be shared with all parents/guardians.