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| St Clare’s Abbey Primary SchoolC/O High StreetNewryCo DownBT34 1HDSt Clare’s site contact details: St Colman’s Abbey site details:Telephone: 028 302 64909 Telephone: 028 302 62175Fax: 028 302 51542 Fax: 028 302 50648Email: mmonaghan771@C2KNI.netPrincipal: Mrs M. Monaghan M.Ed (Educational Management)PQHNI |

05/09/14

Dear parents,

It is great to welcome you back at the start of a very exciting new school year, 2014/15 the first year of our newly amalgamated school- St Clare’s Abbey!

I have been on both sites meeting your beautiful children. Their neat uniforms, lovely personalities and great manners are a credit to you and our school, so thank you!!

I am sure that you have many questions about what the new school will mean for your child as we work from two sites, awaiting the completion of our new building (it is anticipated that this will be in the latter stages of 2015)

From the outside it will look as if little has changed and that we are still operating two schools. I say this because:

* We are working from two sites
* We have two separate uniforms
* The school signs still say ‘ St Colman’s Abbey’ and ‘St Clare’s Convent PS’
* Mr Sweeney will continue to manage the day to day running of the ‘Abbey’ site and I will manage the day to day running of the ‘St Clare’s’ site.

However, the staff have been very busy, working hard behind the scenes, planning how best to manage the merging of the two schools into one. St Clare’s Abbey at this stage is just 5 days old and the process towards full amalgamation will take about 15 months, it is a huge job, but one that we are all eager to work hard at to ensure that St Clare’s Abbey becomes a very successful amalgamation. The new school is much more than just the fabulous new building we are going to have and now is our time of preparation, to ensure that we get it right!

Your child may have told you that he/she is going to be joining with the girls/boys during this term. The teachers have informed them of this and class visits to each other’s school sites have taken place this week. I wish to give you a little more clarity- We will be working on a whole school project during term one which will focus on the legacy left to us by our founders: Blessed Edmund Rice, St Clare and St Francis. The staff from each year group on both sites have come together and planned an exciting programme of work incorporating all aspects of the curriculum. The same lessons will be taught on both sites and the classes for these lessons, which will take place once per week (Thursday is the allocated day), will be taught to boy/girl classes. This will involve half the girls in each year group walking over to the Abbey site whilst half the boys will walk over to the St Clare’s site. This has been carefully planned out and **the only thing that we need parents to do is to ensure that their child has a coat to school each Thursday!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

The advantages of this approach are many:

* It will allow the children to become used to each other at the correct pace.
* It will enable the staff to become accustomed (or re-accustomed for some) to teaching co-ed classes.
* It will also allow pupils to have a wonderful learning experience related very much to the creation of the atmosphere and ethos of our new school. This is a very historical process and it is fitting that the pupils should be totally involved. We want them to be so excited about St Clare’s Abbey.
* It also will ensure that their core learning will continue uninterrupted for the remainder of the week.

As the weeks pass by you will see further aspects of our amalgamation work coming into effect, but I will keep you informed as we proceed. One of the most frequently asked questions has been about the new uniform. We are currently working on our school motto and crest and once these are finished we will begin to work on uniform design. I aim to have the new uniform in the shops next summer ready to be purchased for September 2015.

I will be having parents’ meetings to keep you updated and I will ask for your input into many of the new arrangements that we will be devising this year. In the meantime I urge you to support us in our work by involving yourself in your child’s learning and being patient with the process, trusting that we are working very hard to make it as smooth and beneficial for your child as possible. Mr Sweeney and I will be readily available to answer any queries you may have in relation to day to day issues on either site as will all class teachers.

Looking forward to embarking on this exciting chapter with you,

Yours in partnership,

Mrs M Monaghan

Principal St Clare’s Abbey Primary School