



The Wee Friday Note

Friday 29th September 2023



1. Mateusz Pospiech (P7)

In the early morning of Wednesday 27th September, school learned of the death of Mateusz Pospiech, a member of our P7 class and school family. This was devastating news to receive which, although expected, rocked our school community. Mateusz had been sick for much of his life and many of us had followed his medical journey with hope and prayers over the years. Sadly, Mateusz passed away at his home surrounded by his loving family.

Mateusz truly was a lovely child with a remarkable spirit. In six years, I never once heard Mateusz complain about his health or discomfort. He was a great friend to all who knew him and school staff loved his mischievous nature. It wasn't uncommon for teachers to find a plastic spider in the pages of his homework book or for Mateusz to share a joke with his class that had everyone (including grown-ups) in stitches. We have such strong, vivid and heart-warming memories of Mateusz and these are giving us all comfort at this time.

Although a very difficult day in school, we did have a pre-agreed plan to follow and we were supported through the day by the Education Authority's Critical Incident Team of counsellors; plus our own Julie Magowan. Unsurprisingly, our older children felt the pain of this news most acutely and so, this is where a lot of the support was focussed. Our usual Wednesday counselling sessions and 'drop-in' with Julie ran as usual. Pupils who had been so obviously upset at the beginning of the day began to settle and many children began to share stories about Mateusz with each other as the day wore on. Over the next few days and weeks, there will be different things done to support our pupils; especially the P7 class. We are following the children's lead and following the EA's and Julie Magowan's advice on this. Sometimes what we parents think needs to be done right away, isn't what the children want or need. The children have been told, "You do not have to deal with all your emotions in one day" and this is equally true when it comes to making memory books, memorials etc. Things are still very raw for many pupils.

We have organised a book of condolence for parents to sign if they wish and it is located in the school's front porch area. Some parents have signed it today. It will still be available for parents to sign on Monday and Tuesday of next week 9am to 10:30am and 2pm to 3pm. When complete, it will be given to the Pospiech family. I would encourage all Cregagh PS families to try and sign this book.

As a school community it is very important that we balance showing our support for a grieving family with the need to respect the privacy and space they need. It is not school's job to over-reach or overstep. We cannot share what is known to be or thought to be private. We need to be sensitive and remember that first and foremost, this is a family tragedy.

I will check with the Pospiech family what their wishes are for the day of Mateusz's funeral (confirmed as being on the afternoon of Thursday 5th October) and share the relevant information with you all. From what I understand, a hearse will drive through the estate and past the school between certain times on Thursday afternoon. This will give any families who live locally the chance to pay their respects by coming out onto the street to watch the funeral cortège pass by. I think the actual funeral service will be private. But like I say, I will share (with family permission) any other helpful details.

What I can confirm at this time is that Cregagh Primary School will close for all pupils on Thursday 5th October at 12:50pm (after school lunchtime: dinners and lunches as normal). This will allow parents to take their children home and decide for themselves whether or not to let their child watch the hearse drive through the local area. This is a decision for each family to make for themselves; some children may find it too upsetting.

As a school, we are very mindful of another family of our school for whom this week must have been very difficult, and they too have very much been in our thoughts.

Our deepest sympathy, thoughts and prayers continue to be with Mr and Mrs Pospiech, Suza, Liliana and the entire family circle.

Mr Heggarty

***** IMPORTANT FUTURE DATES FOR YOUR DIARY / CALENDAR *****

Thursday 5th October

School closes at 12:50pm (see attached note)

Please make sure you pick your child up from school on time on this day of all days

Monday 23rd
to Friday 27th October

Parent-Teacher Interviews

School will finish at 1pm every day this week
School dinners as normal

Monday 30th October
to Friday 3rd November

Half-Term Holidays

(5 school days)

Monday 6th November

School Development Day 1

School closed to all pupils

Saturday 11th November

SEAG Paper One

Monday 13th November

Odd Socks Day (Anti-Bullying Week)

Thursday 23rd November

Family Bingo! (PSA event)

Saturday 25th November

SEAG Paper 2

Saturday 2nd December

Christmas Market (PSA event)

Friday 8th December

P1-P3 Nativity

Mount Merrion Parish Church

Wednesday 13th December

P4-P7 Carol Service

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

Tuesday 19th December

Pantomime trip for P4-P7

Waterfront Hall, Belfast

Class parties with Aldo the Magician & Disco

Wednesday 20th December

Last day of term – 12 noon finish

