



News Sheet – October 2025

Safeguarding Team

Designated Teacher: Mrs McGuire
Deputy Designated Teacher: Miss McKernan
Nursery Deputy Designated Teacher: Mrs Mulholland
Principal: Mr Woolsey
Designated Governor: Mrs Sergeant
Chairperson: Mrs Loney

Settling In

We are now nearly one month into our new school year and it has been a very smooth start to the new term. All of our amazing pupils have settled back into school and we are very proud of them. I want to take this opportunity to thank my wonderful staff for all their hard work in ensuring a well organised and smooth start to the term and I also want to thank all of our amazing parents for their continued co-operation and support, ensuring a very smooth start to the new year.

Morning Punctuality

It is vitally important that your child is in school on time every morning. All pupils should be in school for by 8.55am. Doors and gates will be locked promptly at 9am.

Thankyou to the vast majority of parents who are adhering to this and getting their child/ren to school on time every morning.

Year 1 Drop Off

Year 1 parents are reminded that from the start of October, in the mornings, all Year 1 pupils should walk to their class on their own.

Staffing

We welcome Miss Rogers to the staff as a SEN Classroom Assistant in Nursery.

Diary Dates – October 2025

1st Restart a Heart Day
2nd Yr 5 Shared Education session at Bocombra PS
3rd Book Fair Begins
6th Dyslexia Awareness Week
Yr 6 Action Mental Health Workshop
7th Book Fair
8th Book Fair
Yr 5 Shared Education Session at Gosford Forest Park
Yr 3 & 4 Little Healthy Me Workshop
9th Book Fair finishes
9am: Yr1 Mrs Mackle Stay & Play Session
Yr 5 Shared Education Session at Ballyoran
10th World Mental Health Day
Non Uniform Day – Wear Yellow for World Mental Health Day - £1 for Reach Mentoring
9am: Y1 Miss Bettany Stay & Play Session
Last day of Yr 7 swimming block

15th Yr 3 & 4 Little Healthy Me Workshop
 17th Yr 6 Swimming block begins at South Lake Leisure Centre
 20th - 24th Parent/Teacher Meetings begin, school finishes early, no after school clubs
 20th Flu Vaccinations
 22nd Yr 3 & 4 Little Healthy Me Workshop
 Yr 7 at St John the Baptist College Panto – The Wizard of Oz
 27th – 31st School Closed for Half Term

Advance Dates

We aim to work in partnership with parents and, with this in mind; we have arranged as many dates as possible for the school year to give parents as much notice as possible. These can be found on the School App or the Calendar on our website

<https://ballyoranprimary.ovw4.juniperwebsites.co.uk/calendar/?calid=1&pid=7&viewid=1>

Charity

We will be holding the following events for Charity in Term 1 and ask you to please support these:

Friday 10 th October	Wear Yellow Non Uniform Day for REACH mentoring	£1 per child
Friday 14 th November	Wear Something Spotty (Be Spotacular) Non Uniform Day and Bun Sale for BBC Children In Need	Money for Buns
Monday 18 th December	Christmas Jumper Day for Save The Children	£1 per child

Staff supported the Northern Ireland Hospice Coffee Morning this week during the training day.

NSPCC Parent/Carer Workshop

Thank you to those parents who attended on our recent NSPCC Workshop with a focus on keeping pupils safe.

Dental Visit to Caterpillar Room and Butterfly Room

The Caterpillar Room and Butterfly Room had a visit from the dentist on 23rd September, the pupils had their teeth checked and were given information of the importance of good dental hygiene.

Shared Education

Years 6 and 7 started their Shared Education programme with Bocombra Primary School last week with visits to Portadown Rugby Club and the People’s Park.

Year 6 Schools' Singing Programme

Ballyoran Primary School has been invited to be part of a new musical programme this year. The Schools' Singing Programme is an exciting musical initiative that encourages children to grow by discovering the power of their voices. Children sing together in whole class sessions, developing performance skills and broadening their musical horizons. This programme enriches personal and collective worship. Year 6 are taking part in the programme this term and then Year 5 will be doing it after Christmas and it culminates in a special Liturgy Service. Year 6 have already had their first session which they enjoyed greatly.

European Day of Languages

On Friday 26th September we celebrated European Day of Languages. Children were reminded of the diverse and inclusive nature of our school which now has pupils who speak 14 different languages. This was highlighted at our whole school assembly led by Mrs Mackle and pupils completed fun activities in class.

Gaelic Tournament at St John The Baptist College

On Friday 26th September, Year 6 and 7 pupils took part in a gaelic tournament at St John the Baptist's College involving other local primary schools. The boys and girls really did themselves proud, both on the playing field and with their attitude and behaviour. We won every game in the group to qualify for the semi final. Maghery PS proved too strong but the players never gave up and battled well until the end. Huge thanks to St John the Baptist's College for the excellent hospitality and organisation.

School Attendance – Every School Day Counts

Every single day a child is absent from school equates to a day of lost learning. Sometimes attendance percentages can be misleading – as a whole school in 2024/25 we had an average attendance of 92.1%. While this was up on the previous year which is pleasing, from the Department of Education guidance detailed below you can see that this still falls into the 'Poor' to 'Satisfactory' category. As a whole school we would like your cooperation in improving our rate of attendance and in turn reducing the days of lost learning. Please note that rates of attendance are reviewed monthly with the Educational Welfare Office (EWO) and those children falling below 85% are automatically referred to the EWO for intervention. Thank you for your help in this matter. The Department of Education booklet '*School Attendance Matters - A Parent's Guide*' is available on the school website at <https://tinyurl.com/49enzf7j>

100% Attendance	0 Days Missed	Excellent
95% Attendance	9 Days of Absence 1 Week and 4 Days of Learning Missed	Satisfactory
90% Attendance	19 Days of Absence 3 Weeks and 4 Days of Learning Missed	Poor
85% Attendance	28 Days Absence 5 Weeks and 3 Days of Learning Missed	Very Poor
80% Attendance	38 Days of Absence	Unacceptable

	7 Weeks and 3 days of Learning Missed	
75% Attendance	46 Days of Absence 9 Weeks and 1 Day of Learning Missed	Unacceptable

- Due to Department of Education Guidelines, a present mark can only be given if a pupil is in school.
- Just as Attendance is important, Punctuality is also very important as mentioned earlier. **All pupils arriving after the 9am bell will be marked as late.**

Book Fair

This will take place from 3rd to 9th October 2025 in our library and more information will follow in due course.

Office

A reminder that the office hours are as follows:

- Monday - Thursday: 8.15am– 4pm
- Friday: 8.15am – 3.45pm

The office is closed each day as follows:

- 10.10am – 10.25am: Break
- 1.15pm – 1.45pm: Lunch

If you telephone or call at the school during these hours there will be nobody available to speak to you or answer the door.

The office phone is extremely busy at the moment and we would encourage you to leave a message on Option 1 if you are reporting an absence. Also please be patient, if the phone rings continuously this does not mean that there is no-one in the office, it means that the secretary is most likely on another call. Also consider sending an email, if appropriate, rather than making a phone call, to wburrows556@c2ken.net

Parent/Teacher Meetings

These will take place week beginning 20th October. School will finish early every day during that week:

- Nursery: 12.45pm
- Yrs 1 – 2: 12.50pm
- Yrs 3 – 4: 12.55pm
- Yrs 5 – 7: 1pm
- Caterpillar Room & Butterfly Room: 12.45pm

Parent Reply slips must be returned with the eldest in each family by **Friday 3rd October 2025.** Your appointment date and time will be sent home on Tuesday 7th October.

Medication

If your child requires any medication to be taken in school for any reason, a Consent Form must first be completed. These are available at the office or can be downloaded from the school website at <https://www.ballyoranps.com/page/?title=Useful+Forms&pid=80>

School Meals/Dinner Money

Please note the price for school dinners is:

Nursery - £2.50 per day; £12.50 per week

Primary - £2.60 per day; £13.00 per week

All school meals payments must be made using ParentPay

Free School Meals

A reminder that eligible parents should have applied online for the new school year, even parents who were already in receipt of this last year. If you do not make an application your child will have to pay for dinners until the application is approved. Parents of pupils entitled to Free School Meals but have not received notification that this has been approved by EA, will have to pay for the dinners until the point of approval.

Food Allergies/Special Diets

Legislation means that the school kitchen must be aware of any pupils with food allergies. Whilst most special dietary requirements and food allergies should have been made known to the school already through the Medical Register forms, it is of vital importance to inform us if you have not done so already or if your child becomes allergic to something during the school year. Our school kitchen will in turn make appropriate adjustments to their menus.

If your child requires a special diet please complete the forms at

<https://ballyoranprimary.ovw4.juniperwebsites.co.uk/page/?title=School+Meals&pid=74>

and send these into school.

No Nuts Policy

A reminder that Ballyoran Primary School has a **No Nuts Policy** to protect pupils with serious nut allergies. We ask all parents to respect this when sending food into school.

Fizzy Drinks

A reminder that as part of our Healthy Schools Policy, we do not permit pupils to bring fizzy drinks into school.

Smoking/Vaping

As you are aware, it is School Policy that smoking including e-cigarettes and vaping is not permitted within school grounds.

First Aid

Currently the school has 6 First Aiders:

- Mr Hendron (Co-ordinator)
- Mrs Stewart
- Miss Wilson
- Mrs Nellins
- Mrs Muldrew
- Mrs Somerville

This number will increase in the coming weeks as more staff are being trained.

Breakfast Club

All pupils are welcome to attend in the Dinner Hall from 8.15 – 8.45am. The cost is £1 per day. Parents must book and pay for Breakfast Club on Parent Pay.

Mental Health and Well Being

The mental health and well-being of our pupils and staff is of paramount importance. We have a number of interventions available in school for pupils who are struggling with social, emotional, behavioural or well being issues whereby they go out of class and speak to someone on a weekly basis:

- Solas Mentoring
- Reach Mentoring
- Links Counselling
- Music Therapy

If you feel that your child would benefit from any of these, please contact their teacher.

After School Clubs

Our programme of After School Clubs is well underway and being well supported, pupils have the opportunity to attend Gaelic, Art & Craft, Sports and Lego. We are delighted to be able to offer Irish Dancing for the first time since Mrs Heaney retired. Another block of clubs will be advertised soon for November/December.

Breaktime Snack: Nursery – Year 2

Nursery and Foundation Stage (Yrs 1 – 2) parents are asked to contribute £10 a month per child towards the daily snack and toy fund. **Please note that this money should be paid at the start of each month on Parent Pay.**

Yr 3 – 7 Class Funds

We have asked parents to pay £10 per pupil in Yrs 3 – 7 on Parent Pay by the end of September. Thank you to the majority of parents who have already paid this. We would be very grateful if the remaining parents could make the payment as soon as possible. Thank you in anticipation.

Healthy Breaks: Years 3 - 7

Years 3 – 7 must bring in their own healthy snack of fruit, vegetables, yogurts or breads. No fizzy drinks, chocolate, sweets or crisps are allowed as part of our Healthy Breaks Policy. Unfortunately, a number of pupils are coming into school with unhealthy snacks for break. To help parents we have created a table of suitable and non-suitable healthy breaks:

Suitable healthy break snacks	Not allowed at break
Pieces of fresh fruit	Any type of confectionery, eg chocolate products and sweets

Fruit pots of sliced or chopped fresh fruit	Crisps and crisp-like products such as tortilla chips, potato sticks, corn chips, prawn crackers, puff crackers
Canned fruit in natural juice	Cakes, buns or pastries
Salad pots	Cereal or fruit bars
Raw vegetables such as tomatoes, carrots, celery, peppers and cucumber	All biscuits
Bread, pancakes or scones with a thin spread of butter	Fizzy drinks
Breadsticks or crackers with cheese	Dried fruit that has been sugared or coated in yogurt or chocolate
Sandwiches, bagels, baguettes, pitta bread, tortilla wraps or rolls	Pretzels
Yogurts	Nuts

More information is available at:

Healthy Breaks <https://tinyurl.com/yc4z5r29>

Healthy Lunches <https://tinyurl.com/2p9pbb8z>

Healthy Choices <https://tinyurl.com/mrepcxs6>

Dogs

A reminder that dogs are not permitted on the school grounds for Health and Safety reasons.

Swimming

Year 5 – 7 pupils will be swimming this year on Fridays as usual, in the South Lake Leisure Centre. Each class will have a block on a rota and Year 7 are currently swimming.

House System

The school continues to operate the House Competition. All pupils have been placed into one of three houses:

- Bann
- Lagan
- Foyle

Points are awarded to pupils for a range of things, (e.g. good manners) and the points are displayed in the Assembly Hall each week with a monthly House Cup and prize presented to the House with the most points.

Congratulations to the following Yr 6 and 7 pupils who have been elected as Captains and Vice Captains this year.

House	Captain	Vice-Captain
Bann	Caitlin Corrigan	Niamh Doyle
Foyle	Jay Kelly	Nicole Poliakova

Lagan	Gracella Soares Vaz	Emilie Lawless
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Pupil Council

Congratulations to our new Pupil Council for this year:

Class	Pupils
Yr 7	Rachel Hall & Isaac Sergeant
Yr 6	Maria Fialho & Oliwier Rozynek
Yr 5	Caila Vaz & Leon Geary
Yr 4	April White & Patrick Brankin
Butterfly Room	Alessandra Da Veiga & Cain Creaney

Chairperson: Rachel Hall
Vice Chairperson: Cain Creaney

Digital Leaders

Well done to our Digital Leaders for this year:

Yr 3	Oisin Calvert	Sofia Poliakova
Yr 4	Mila McKernan	Conor Hamilton
Yr 5	Jackson Lopes	Elena Peneva
Yr 6	David Fortes	Maria Fialho
Yr 7	Franek Kurowski-Buksa	Rachel Hall
Butterfly Room	Sean Og McConaghy	Alessandra Da Veiga

Eco Committee

Well done to the following pupils have been elected as Eco Committee Members representing their class this year:

Year 4	Hayley Corkin	Eli Nosal
Year 5	Daragh Lucas Knox	Katie McCann
Year 6	Maisie Hackett	Aedan Creaney
Year 7	Santiago Liggett	Aixa Mendes
Butterfly Room	Salvina Ciurana	Sean Og McCaughy

Playground Friends

Year 7 pupils have been again given the opportunity to become Playground Friends and all of them applied and are now carrying out this role.

School App

It is important that all parents authenticate the school app as all communication for individual classes will be sent and received through the App. If you are unable to access the school app please contact the office. Guidance on our school app can be found at:

<https://tinyurl.com/2p98mfm2>

Parent Information Booklet

Every family received a copy of this on the app at the start of term and we ask that you read this carefully as it contains very important information for this year:

<https://tinyurl.com/ye65jtpy>

School Website

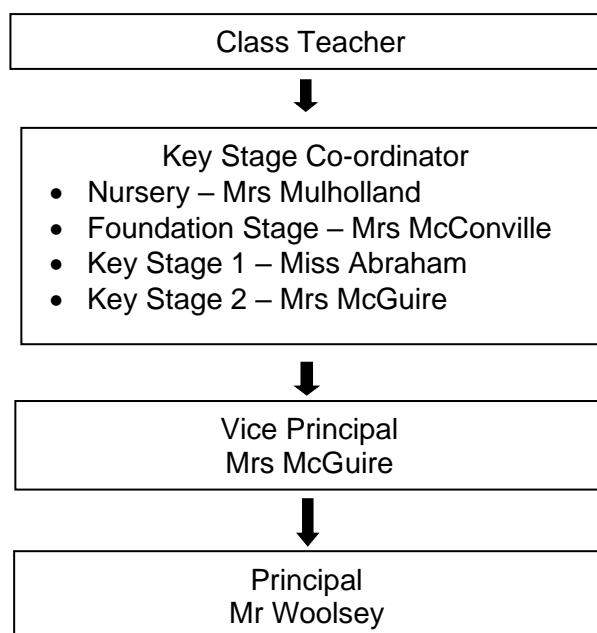
Keep up-to-date with school news, information and events by logging on to our new website at www.ballyoranps.com. Class Pages will be updated regularly giving parents a useful insight into what their children are doing in class

General Queries / Concerns

At Ballyoran Primary School we believe in a strong partnership with parents and communication between home and school is a vital part of this.

If you need to speak to your child's teacher, you should contact the office in the first instance and a suitable time will be arranged. Unfortunately, it will not be possible for parents to speak to teachers in the morning as they are busy preparing for the day and supervising pupils. If you do need to pass an urgent message to the teacher in the morning, please either send an email, note or speak to the secretary who will pass the message on.

Meetings can be arranged with staff at a mutually convenient time through the office and we would encourage you to follow the flow chart below when raising general queries / concerns:



Picking Pupils Up

It is vital that parents are punctual when collecting their children otherwise they get anxious. If you are running late we would ask that you phone the office and inform us of this. If a child is not collected and we are unable to make contact with parents/carers we have no option but to phone Social Services and/or the Police.

Emergency Contact Details

It is vital that we hold up-to-date information on every child in school. If any information changes during the year, e.g. telephone numbers, address, medical details, it is **your responsibility** to inform the school immediately. In the past unfortunately, there have been occasions when we have been unable to contact parents, in emergency situations, or for pupils who have not been picked up, because we did not have up to date contact numbers or no one answered the phone. In some instances, we have had no choice but to contact Social Services and/or the Police.

New School Dinner Menu

The EA have published a new menu for October onwards and it can be found at:
<https://tinyurl.com/4r9fy4er>

Thank you for your continued support and co-operation.

Richard Woolsey
Principal