



Safeguarding Team

Principal: Mr Woolsey

Designated Teacher: Mrs McGuire

Deputy Designated Teacher: Miss McKernan

Nursery Deputy Designated

Teacher: Mrs Mulholland

Designated Governor: Mrs Sergeant

Chairperson: Mrs Loney

News Sheet – December 2025

Diary Dates – December 2025

- 1st Foundation Stage at 'The Penguin Who Got Lost in the Snow' at Navan Centre
- 2nd KS1 & 2 & Butterfly Room: Panto: Beauty & the Beast - Market Place Theatre
- 3rd Jo Jingles in Nursery
- 4th 11am: Shared Education Christmas Carol Service with Bocombra: Parents welcome
- 5th Daily Mile Santa Run
Yr 7 at St John the Baptist's College Taster Day
11am: Year 6 at Schools Singing Programme Advent Mass at St John's – all parents welcome
Christmas Dinner in Canteen
- 8th Yr 6 Filming for Archbishops Christmas Message: Pastoral Centre
- 10th 10am: Nursery Christmas Sing - a -Long (ticket only)
- 11th 10am: Primary Performance 1: 'Bethlehem Bake Off' (ticket only)
- 12th 10am: Primary Performance 2: 'Bethlehem Bake Off' (ticket only)
School finishes early for all pupils:
- Nursery: 12.45pm
 - Yrs 1 – 2: 12.50pm
 - Yrs 3 – 4: 12.55pm
 - Yrs 5 – 7: 1pm
 - Caterpillar Room & Butterfly Room: 12.45pm
- 14th 3pm: Choir Singing at Parish Carol Service – all parents welcome
- 16th Christmas Music with South Ulster Community Band (pupils only)
- 18th Christmas Jumper Day for Charity (£1 each) & Class Christmas Parties
- 19th Last day of term, no uniform, no dinners, school finishes early, dismissals as follows:
- 11.45am: Yrs 5 – 7, Caterpillar Room & Butterfly Room
 - 11.50am: Yrs 3 & 4
 - 11.55am: Yrs 1 & 2
 - 12noon: Nursery

Christmas Holidays

School will be closed from Monday 22nd December 2025 to Monday 5th January 2026. Term 2 begins on **Tuesday 6th January 2026.**

Staffing

We welcome Miss McIlkenny to the staff as a SEN Classroom Assistant in Yr 4.

Sickness

You will be aware that there is a lot of sickness around at the moment particularly coughs, colds and flus. Parents are reminded to go over the following important infection control measures with their children:

- Good hand hygiene
- Good respiratory hygiene (Catch It, Bin It, Kill It)
- A reminder that if your child has vomiting or diarrhoea, they should remain off school for 48 hours after the last episode of sickness or diarrhoea.

Please see the latest PHA Guidance for infection control in school settings which gives recommended times for pupils to be kept off school for various illnesses:

<https://tinyurl.com/44nrzcty>

There is also a simplified version of this on the last page.

Anti-Bullying Week

Throughout the week beginning 10th November, we have all enjoyed participating in activities based on this year's theme 'Power For Good'. Mrs McGuire led an Assembly to launch Anti-Bullying Week and the pupils participated in many activities during the week focusing on anti-bullying.

Attendance

Well done to the following classes who had the highest attendance for the month of October:

- Foundation/Key Stage 1: Year 2 with 97.2%
- Key Stage 2: Yr 6: 98%

The overall school attendance for the month of October was 94.7%, this is the highest monthly attendance percentage since the pandemic which is very pleasing.

First Aiders

Congratulations to Miss Murray and Mrs McDonnell who have successfully completed their First Aid at Work Course recently.

Christmas Performances

We are looking forward to Christmas and pupils and staff are working hard, preparing for our Christmas shows. The Nursery Celebration 'A Christmas Sing Along' will take place on 10th December at 10am and the Primary School will perform 'Bethlehem Bake-Off' on 11th and 12th December at 10am. All 3 performances will be followed by Christmas Refreshments in the Dinnerhall. Tickets are selling fast so please book and pay for these on Parent Pay as soon as possible to avoid disappointment. The proceeds will go towards a new Sensory Corridor and Quiet Room. **Remember entrance is by ticket only.**

Journey To Santa

Our pupils are currently taking part in the 'Journey to Santa' challenge with the Walk, Wheel, Cycle Trust. This is running from Monday 24th November until Friday 12th December. To complete this, the children will get a simple stamp sheet to complete, and they will colour in a wreath on the sheet each day they do an active journey to school. The pupils have 3 weeks to do 10 active journeys to school.

The children who complete 10 journeys to school will be entered into a draw with one winner from KS1 and one winner from KS2. These names will be then entered into another draw with other winners from different schools. The prize for KS1 is a £50 Halfords Voucher and the prize for KS2 will be a new Scooter. This will be a fun walk to school initiative for all the pupils in the run up to Christmas! Please encourage your child/children to take part if they can.

Canteen Christmas Dinner

Our kitchen staff will be serving Christmas Dinner on **Friday 5th December 2025**. This will be available to all pupils, even those who do not normally take dinner and is priced at the normal school dinner cost and should be ordered on Parent Pay.

Christmas Cards designed by pupils

These will be sent home next week, please return with the order form and money in a labelled envelope by **Friday 5th December 2025** if you wish to order.

Christmas Gifts

This year we are again asking that instead of buying presents for staff that you consider donating to the St Vincent De Paul Christmas Appeal at: <https://www.svp.ie/christmas/>

Coats Rule

As the weather has been turning colder in recent weeks, we have been advising pupils to bring a warm coat to school. From **Monday 1st December 2025**, any pupils who do not bring a coat to school will have to remain inside at break and lunch time.

Homework

A reminder that Homework has now finished for Term 1. Any Homework Passes that your child has left, should be kept until Term 2.

Exciting News for Year 6 Class

Our Year 6 class has been shining in the Schools Singing Programme this term, enjoying weekly sessions with Orla and Sara-Jane. We are thrilled to be able to share that they have been chosen to sing as part of the Archbishops Christmas Message, airing on RTÉ One this Christmas morning! Filming takes place on 8th December and the pupils are working hard in preparation for this. This is a privilege and honour for our school and a fabulous opportunity for our amazing pupils and we couldn't be prouder of their hard work and dedication.

Choir at St John's Carol Service

Our School Choir conducted by Aine McKee are delighted to be taking part in the Parish Christmas Carol Service in St John's Church on Sunday 14th December 2025 at 3pm. All parents and friends are welcome to attend.

Parents & Friends Christmas Draw

We had a Parents and Friends Meeting recently, at which it was decided to hold a Christmas Draw again. Information on this will be sent out in due course and we would ask for your support, this money will also go towards a new Sensory Corridor and Quiet Room for our pupils.

School Photographs

Information on ordering these will be sent home with pupils today. Please order online using the QR Code on the sheet. The deadline for orders for free delivery to the school will be **Sunday 7th December 2025**. Photos will be with you before Christmas. Orders after this date will still be possible but there will be an additional £5 postage charge.

Year 3 Trip to Armagh County Museum

Year 3 had an amazing day exploring Armagh County Museum! The highlight of the trip was getting to see real-life household items from the past. From heavy irons to old-fashioned washboards, we discovered just how different life was for families many years ago. Not only did we look at these fascinating objects, but we also had the chance to use and play with some of them. It was eye-opening to experience how much effort went into simple daily chores like washing clothes or preparing meals—tasks that we can now do with the push of a button! To remember our special day, we created an art piece inspired by the museum. We finished the day with a fun scavenger hunt around The Mall, where we worked in teams to find clues and explore the beautiful surroundings. It was the perfect ending to a trip full of learning, laughter, and discovery!

Eco Committee Working on Outdoor Classroom

Our Eco Committee has been working tirelessly to breathe new life into the Outdoor Classroom! Their efforts have already brought a splash of colour and created a welcoming space where classes can enjoy learning in nature on a regular basis. The next step for the Eco committee is to continue developing the area through tidying and organising the space so it is fully fit for purpose once again. This revamp project will ensure the Outdoor Classroom becomes a hub for creativity, exploration, and environmental awareness. A huge thank you to the Eco Committee for their dedication and hard work—watch this space for more exciting updates as the transformation continues!

Children In Need

On Friday 14th November we had such a fun day raising money for BBC Children in Need. Pupils came to school wearing something spotty and enjoyed a delicious bun sale, with treats baked and donated by our wonderful school community. This year's theme is 'Challenge Yourself to 25' and our pupils rose to the occasion brilliantly. Throughout the week, classes took on a variety of challenges linked to the number 25 – from completing 25 physical challenges, 25 creative challenges and 25

learning challenges to 25 kindness challenges. Well done to all of our pupils – approximately £600 was raised! We are incredibly proud of their effort, enthusiasm and kindness. Thank you to everyone who donated so generously to this very worthwhile charity.

Dream Space Ambassador Training

The Dream Space Ambassadors completed their second training session recently, focusing on the use of Micro:bits. During this session, pupils used block coding to input commands into their online Micro:bit devices. But the learning doesn't stop there as next week, these tech-savvy leaders will be visiting classrooms across the school to share their skills and inspire their peers.

Barclays Bank Financial Capability Workshops

Key Stage 2 had a very special visit recently from Barclays Bank discussing Financial Life Skills, counting money, budgeting and using money for shopping. A big thank you to the two representatives who delivered such an informative session.

PSNI Visit to Classes

We were recently delighted to welcome the Neighbourhood Policing Team to Ballyoran Primary School. They delivered engaging talks to Nursery, Year 2, the Butterfly Room, and the Caterpillar Room as part of their topic, People Who Help Us.

PSNI Online Safety Workshop for Parents

Thank you to the PSNI for delivering an informative Online Safety Talk to our parents recently. The session covered practical tips for keeping children safe online, understanding social media risks and promoting positive digital habits at home. Together, we can help our children navigate the online world safely and responsibly.

Fire & Rescue Service Visit Year 5

Year 5 learned some life-saving information today in a recent talk from the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service. We learned about the 'good guys' and 'bad guys' of fire safety. We discussed how to prevent fires using the acronym STOP, and learnt what to do if there was a fire in our homes. A big thank you to Mark and Agnes for an engaging and informative talk.

Year 7 Trip to Armagh County Museum

On Wednesday 26th November Year 7 enjoyed a fantastic trip to Armagh County Museum. We really enjoyed their Victorian Inventions workshop and it was fascinating to not only find out more about the inventions we have been learning about in school, but also to be able to see them up close and investigate them for ourselves. We also got to see and learn how these inventions have changed and developed over the time to things we still use today. We got to try out writing with a quill and ink, try on corsets and crinolines and a few of us even had to try on the dunce's hat. It really helped bring our Victorians topic to life for us.

Well Being Ambassador Training

Our wonderful Wellbeing Ambassadors have now completed their second week of training. They have been busy learning about the 5 Ways to Wellbeing, playing games to connect with each other, as well as creating fun activities for our younger pupils to enjoy at break and lunch times. They have also been acting out playground scenarios to practise how they can help others and promote kindness throughout our school. We are so proud of their enthusiasm and commitment to making our school an even happier and healthier place

Admissions for Nursery and Year 1 – September 2026

The application process for Admission to Nursery and P1 in September 2026 will open at 12 noon on **Wednesday 7th January 2025** and close at 12 noon on **Wednesday 21st January 2026**. Parents can apply by clicking on <https://www.eani.org.uk/parents/admissions>

Post Primary Admissions – September 2026

Our 7 pupils have started to attend Taster Days in local Post Primary Schools and have visits from staff from Post Primary Schools in preparation for the Admissions process in the new year. We would encourage our Year 7 pupils to visit as many schools as possible and ensure all your questions are answered before making this very important decision. The application process for Admission to Year 8 in September 2026 will open at 12 noon on **Tuesday 27th January 2025** and close at 12 noon on **Thursday 19th February 2026**. Parents can apply by clicking on <https://www.eani.org.uk/parents/admissions/post-primary-admissions-guide>

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.

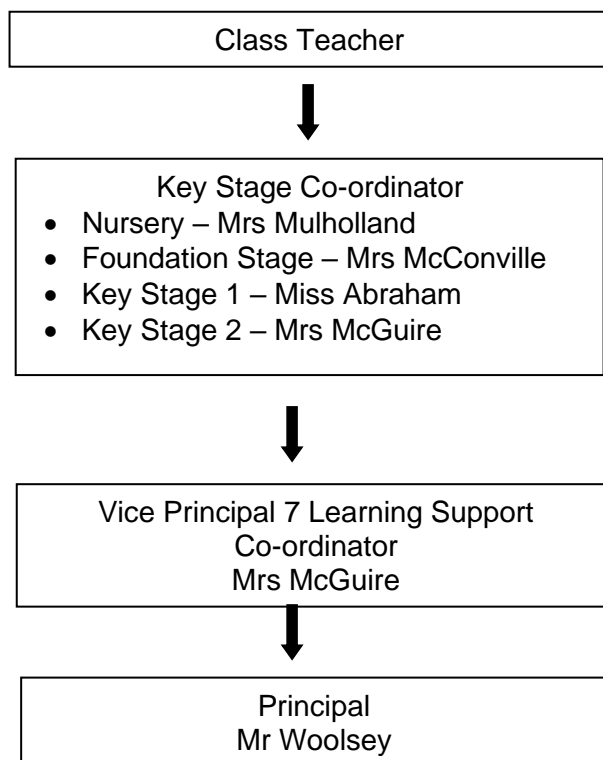
Emergency Contact Details

It is vitally important that we hold up to date emergency contact details for our pupils. I cannot stress the importance of this enough, please keep us up to date. Again as with late pick up, if we are unable to contact a parent/carer in the event of an emergency we will have no option but to refer this to Social Services.

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:



Contingency Planning - Winter

As the winter is fast approaching, the school has been reviewing its contingency plans should the school need to close due to bad weather. Once again, we will be using our Text Alert System, School App, Face Book and the school website to inform parents should a closure be necessary.

School Dinner Menu

<https://www.ballyoranps.com/attachments/download.asp?file=187&type=pdf>

Thank you for your continued support and co-operation during these busy weeks in school.

Richard Woolsey
Principal

Do I need to keep my child off school?

Chicken Pox

Until all spots have crusted over

Conjunctivitis

No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed

Diarrhoea & Vomiting

48 hours from last episode

Glandular Fever

No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed

Hand, foot & mouth

No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed

Impetigo

Until lesions are crusted & healed or 48 Hours after commencing antibiotics

Measles or German Measles

4 days from onset of rash

Mumps

5 days from onset of swelling

Scabies

Until after first treatment

Scarlet Fever

24 hours after commencing antibiotics

Slapped Cheek

No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed

Whooping Cough

48 Hours after commencing antibiotics

Flu

Until recovered

Head Lice

No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed

Threadworms

No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed

Tonsillitis

No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed