



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 – Christmas 2025

Merry Christmas



Winning Design for School Christmas Card Competition
by Joss Ximenes
(Year 3)

End of Term Arrangements

Thursday 18th December is Christmas Jumper Day and Class Party Day, this is a Non Uniform Day and pupils should wear a Christmas Jumper and bring in £1 for Save The Children. Pupils should also bring some party food to share at the class parties, a reminder no items with nuts please.

School will finish on Friday 19th December 2025 which will have an early finish time. Pupils do not need to wear uniform on this day and there will be no dinners served.

Staggered Early Dismissal Arrangements are as follows:

- 11.45am: Yrs 5 – 7, Caterpillar Room & Butterfly Room
- 11.50am: Yrs 3 & 4
- 11.55am: Yrs 1 & 2
- Nursery: 12noon

Start of New Term

Ballyoran Primary School will re-open for pupils on **Tuesday 6th January 2026**

Diary Dates for January 2026

- 6th Term 2 Begins
Breakfast Club reopens
Sensory Motor Group restarts
- 7th Nursery and P1 Online Application process opens at 12noon
Yr 6 pupils to Shared Education STEM Trip at Dreamspace
- 9th Lismore and St John The Baptist's College Year 7 Visits
Year 5 swimming block begins at South Lake Leisure Centre
- 19th Pupil Council Meeting
- 20th NSPCC Workshops – 'Speak Out, Stay Safe': Yrs 3, 6 & 7
- 21st Nursery & P1 Online Application process closes at 12noon
- 23rd Ditch The Dark Day – Non Uniform
- 24th Year 7 Transfer Test (SEAG) Results
- 27th Year 7 Online Transfer Application Process for Year 8 opens at 12noon

School Meals Price Increase

As you will be aware the EA are increasing the price of Free School Meals from the new year. This price rise is out of our control and will take effect from **Tuesday 6th January 2026**. There has been an increase of 50p in the price of a meal, meaning the new prices will be:

- Nursery: £3.00 per day, £15 for a week
- Primary: £3.10 per day, £15.50 for a week

Prices will be amended on Parent Pay to reflect this.

This does not impact on pupils entitled to Free School Meals.

General Sickness

Unfortunately, there is still a lot of sickness and flu around. A reminder that if pupils have a vomiting or diarrhoea bug they should not be sent to school and should not return to school until 48 hours after their last vomiting or diarrhoea episode. This is to protect the school community as these bugs

can very quickly travel around the school. Parents are also reminded to go over the importance of good hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene (Catch It, Bin It, Kill It) with their children. Finally, 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>

Sporting Achievement at the Swim Ulster Primary Schools Cup & Championships 2025

Well done to Elisabeth Sergeant in Year 6 pupils who represented Ballyoran Primary School at the Swim Ulster Primary Schools Cup & Championships 2025 at the Aurora Aquatic & Leisure Complex, Bangor recently. She swam amazingly well in both of her races, especially in her breaststroke, shaving three seconds off her personal best. This was her first gala of this size and a huge achievement and as a school we are incredibly proud of her.

Foundation Stage Trip to 'The Penguin who got lost in the Snow' at the Navan Centre

On Monday 1st December our Foundation Stage and Caterpillar Room pupils enjoyed a magical Christmas experience at the Navan Centre in Armagh. The pupils were captivated by the live stage show The Penguin Who Lost His Way, followed by a special visit to see Santa. The pupils created festive penguins during an arts and crafts session and enjoyed some delicious Christmas treats. It was a day filled with lots of excitement and festive cheer.

Key Stages 1 & 2 attend Beauty & The Beast at The Market Place Theatre

Key Stage 1, 2 and the Butterfly Room enjoyed watching Beauty and the Beast at the Market Place Theatre, Armagh on Tuesday 2nd December. It was a fantastic show and was enjoyed by all!

Jo Jingles Visit to Nursery & Year 1

Jo Jingles brought us magic on Wednesday 3rd December! Our Nursery and Year 1 had an amazing morning filled with toe-tapping tunes, giggles galore and plenty of festive sparkle. We danced, we sang and we jingled all the way into Christmas spirit!

Shared Education Carol Service

On Tuesday 4th December we welcomed Bocombra Primary School choir for our very first Shared Education Christmas Carol Service. The hall was filled with the joyful sounds of our talented strings group, followed by heartwarming carols from our joint choir. It was a truly magical morning brimming with festive cheer and Christmas spirit. A huge congratulations to all the children who made this celebration so special. What a wonderful way to start the season!

Year 6 Perform at Schools Singing Programme Advent Carol Service

Year 6 pupils joined together in a beautiful celebration of faith and music at a special Advent Mass in St. John the Baptist's Church on Friday 5th December. As part of the Schools Singing Programme, the children lifted their voices in song, creating a joyful atmosphere to mark this important season of preparation. We are so proud of their participation and the sense of community they shared with other local schools. A wonderful way to begin Advent! A big well done to all involved.

Christmas Dinner

Our pupils continued in the festive mood on Friday 5th December as they enjoyed an absolutely delicious Christmas Dinner in school. A big thank you to our Catering Manager Mrs Campbell and her team for preparing this and looking after us so well.

Daily Mile Santa Run

Pupils took part in this on Friday 5th December.

Year 6 Recording of Archbishops Christmas Message

Our Year 6 pupils, along with Year 6 pupils from Presentation PS spent Monday 8th December at the Pastoral Centre, filming for the Archbishops Annual Christmas Message. This will air on RTÉ One this Christmas morning! They sang amazingly well and we are so proud of all of them. We look forward to seeing them on television next week.

Nursery Sing-A-Long

We had such a lovely morning at our Nursery Christmas Sing-Along on Wednesday 10th December! The children were fantastic-they performed with so much joy and sang lots of festive songs for everyone. It was a wonderful way to share some Christmas spirit together. Thank you to all the staff for their hard work in preparing for this and to all our parents and families who supported this event.

Bethlehem Bake Off

WHAT A SHOW! Two sold-out performances of Bethlehem Bake Off and we are all so proud of the children. It was wonderful to see so many happy faces shining on stage and it's clear we have many stars to watch out for in the future! A huge thank you to our amazing staff for all their teamwork and hard work in bringing this show to life. We are incredibly proud of everyone at Ballyoran Primary School! Thank you to all the parents and families who supported this event.

A big thankyou to everyone who supported our Christmas shows by buying tickets to attend, all of the money raised will go towards our NEW Sensory Corridors and Quiet Room.

Christmas Show Recordings

Full recordings of the two shows have been made available for all parents at the following links:

Bethlehem Bake-Off:

<https://youtu.be/rGxwEasX7ec?si=xgGXrgR6Qr79B3jf>

Nursery Sing-Along:

https://youtu.be/QbmaROJwkaU?si=T_vOPTfpGG-ds7MO

Parish Carol Service

Well done to our amazing School Choir who sang so well at the Parish Carol Service, in St John the Baptist Church, on Sunday 14th December 2025. The pupils were conducted by Aine McKee and we are very grateful to her for all her hard work in preparing the Choir for this event. We are very proud of all the pupils who represented Ballyoran so well at this event.

South Ulster Community Band Christmas Concert

We were delighted to welcome members of the South Ulster Community Band to our school on 16th December, who treated us to some Christmas music. Our very own Mr Hendron is part of this amazing band and we are always so happy to have them in school. A special well done to our guest conductors Cally and Miss Martin who both did a great job keeping the band in time.

School Christmas Card Competition

Thank you to all of our pupils for taking part in our Annual Christmas Card Competition, as ever the standard was very high. The winners and runner ups are as follows:

Class	Winner	Runner Up
Butterfly Room	Cora Kilgallon	Eva-Rose Teague
Year 1	Cayliegh Boyd	Lena Michalik
Year 1	Olly Corkin	Casper Nosal
Year 2	Luca Ciornei	Charlie Varela
Year 3	Joss Ximenes	Amaja Ahatty
Year 4	Jose Ximenes	Leah Nosal
Year 5	Jackson Lopes	Livia Varela
Year 6	Emilie Lawless	Niamh Doyle
Year 7	Varshita Mahesh Babu	Gracella Soares Vaz
Caterpillar Room	Paul Petreus	Alessandra Da Veiga

All these pupils received prizes for their efforts.

Overall Winner

Well done to Joss Ximenes – Year 3 who was the overall winner for the entire school. His design has been made into our official school Christmas Card for this year and features on the front page of this News Sheet.

Parents & Friends Christmas Raffle

Our Christmas Raffle was very well supported, a big thank you to everyone who bought tickets for these and a special thank you to our Parents and Friends Committee for organising this. Thankyou also to all the local businesses who supported the school by donating prizes so generously:

- McCracken's Spar
- O'Neill's Sports
- Miss Ellagance Hair & Beauty
- C Mallon Family Butchers
- M&M Cocktails
- Wilson's Supervalu
- Vivo Shop
- Knox's Butchers
- Ivory Dun Hair, Nails & Beauty

The raffled raised £1156.20 all of the money raised from the raffle will go towards our new Sensory Corridor and Nursery Quiet Room.

Our Raffle Winners were: Teresa McKernan, Cian Creaney, Kevin Eadie, Leah McFarland, Martina Ferguson, Adrian McKernan, Emma McGeown, Elsy Geary, Viorica Nemcite, Leon Geary & Deborah Luis.

Post Box Visit

Year 2 have been learning all about the journey of a letter in Literacy. The pupils enjoyed a walk to the post box to post home their handmade Christmas cards to their families.

Journey to Santa

Well done to everyone who took part in this so enthusiastically. The winners were announced in assembly this week and were:

- Amelia Kazmierska – Yr 3
- Calvin McCann – Yr 7

Both winners were placed in a draw with other schools who took part and Calvin has won a scooter.

Class Parties, Discos and Gifts

All our classes will have their Christmas parties on Thursday 18th December, our Christmas Jumper Day (£1 for Save The Children). Santa also visited Years 1 – 2. Every pupil will receive a selection box from the school on this day also.

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.

Punctuality

A reminder that all primary pupils must be in school every morning for 8.55am and Nursery pupils must be in school by 9am. If pupils are late, this causes disruption and negatively impacts the learning of the pupil who is late and the rest of the class.

Communication With School

Please note that communication with the school is via email or phoning the school. Direct Messages on Facebook are not monitored and will not be replied to.

Attendance

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

- Foundation/Key Stage 1: Caterpillar Room: 97.4%
- Key Stage 2: Yr 6: 95.3%

The overall school attendance for the month of November was 93.5%.

After School Clubs – Term 2

A new Menu of Clubs is being prepared for Term 2 and an app message will be sent out shortly allowing you to book these.

Admissions for Nursery and Year 1 – September 2025

The admissions process for Nursery and Year 1 for September 2026 will open at 12noon on **Wednesday 7th January 2026** and close at 12 noon on **Wednesday 21st January 2026**. Parents can apply by clicking on <https://www.eani.org.uk/parents/admissions>

Year 7 Transfer to Post Primary School

The post primary admissions process portal opens at **12noon on Tuesday 27th January 2026** and closes at **12noon on Thursday 19th February 2025**. Parents should apply on the EA website at <https://www.eani.org.uk/parents/admissions>

Coats

Thank you to all parents for ensuring that your children are in school every day with a coat. Please ensure this continues throughout the winter. It is also important that your child's name is on all clothing.

Contingency Planning - Winter

As we are now in Winter, 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, Facebook and the school website to inform parents should a closure be necessary.

PSNI Online Safety Warning for Children receiving electronic Christmas Gifts

Many children and young people will receive new devices and computer games for Christmas, but we're asking parents, do you know what your child is doing online or most importantly, who they are talking to?

For some children, it will be the first time they've owned a device that connects them to the online world. Even for older children, a new device means new corners of the digital landscape to explore – and unfortunately, new risks to be aware of.

Along with our partners at the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland, we have put together some key tips on how to make sure children enjoy the internet safely.

These tips include; checking the privacy, location and parental controls on devices that the child uses, checking the direct messages and chat functions on apps, using parental controls and having open conversations with their child about what they are doing online.

Parents and carers can access the Safeguarding Board NI App for online safety information and advice.

Practical tips and advice have been published on the Police Service's website here:

<https://tinyurl.com/3ean6kbbk>

Office 365

We know that many pupils may get new computers/laptops over Christmas. Please do not buy Microsoft Office for these. Office 365 which includes Word, Powerpoint and Excel is available free of charge to all pupils. It can be downloaded following the guidance at the following link:

<https://tinyurl.com/ycyd9f4b>

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 and have exhausted all listed contacts, we have no option but to phone Social Services.

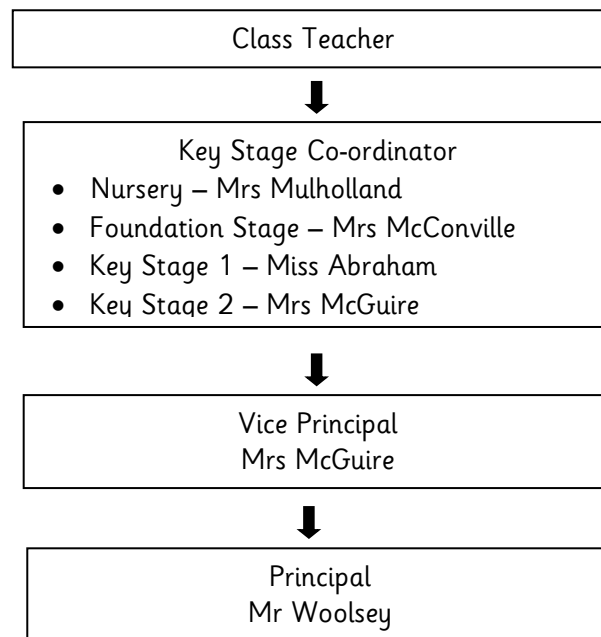
Emergency Contact Details

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 and have exhausted all listed contacts, 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:



School Dinner Menu

As you know a rolling monthly menu is in place for term 1 and is available at

<https://ballyoranprimary.ovw4.juniperwebsites.co.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=187&type=pdf>

School Website

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

School App

It is important that all parents download and authenticate the school app as all communication is now sent through the App. If you do not have the school app, you will miss vital communications from school.

Thanks and Happy Christmas

A big thank you to all my amazing Staff for all their hard work this term, thank you also to our incredible parents for your continued support and finally, thank you to all of our wonderful pupils, who we are so proud of, for making Ballyoran Primary School such a special place.

Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

Richard Woolsey
Principal

