



News Sheet – March 2025

Safeguarding Team

Principal: Mr Woolsey
Designated Teacher: Mrs McGuire
Deputy Designated Teacher: Mrs Somerville
Nursery Deputy Designated Teacher: Mrs Mulholland
Designated Governor: Mrs Loney
Chairperson: Mr Fleming

Diary Dates for March 2025

3 rd	Coats Rule relaxed
6 th	World Book Day
10 th – 14 th	Parent/Teacher Consultation Week - school finishes early for all pupils
17 th	School Closed St Patrick's Day Holiday
18 th	School Closed for Staff Training
19 th	Year 4 First Confession at St John's
22 nd	Confirmation at St John's at 3pm

School Closures – March 2025

Ballyoran Primary School will be closed as follows during March:

Monday 17th & Tuesday 18th March: St. Patrick's Day & Staff Training Day

Staffing

We welcome Mrs Burrows to school as our new secretary and Ms McGeown as an SEN Classroom Assistant in Nursery. We hope that you will both settle in very quickly.

Children's Mental Health Week

We marked Children's Mental Health Week from 3rd to 7th February in school.

Safer Internet Day

On Tuesday 4th February our school celebrated Safer Internet Day 2025. This year's theme was 'Too good to be true? Protecting yourself and others from scams online'. Children in Years 1 to 3 attended an assembly led by Mrs McConville focusing on staying safe online and what to do and who to talk to when we are worried about something we experience online. Years 4 to 7 attended an assembly led by Mrs Biggerstaff and our Digital Leaders who did an excellent job teaching their peers how to identify and avoid scams and what to do when we encounter them. We hope that you had a chance to talk to your children about online safety through the homework activities and encourage you to continue to do so regularly as we all work together towards keeping children safe when they are online.

Wear Red Day – NI Chest, Heart & Stroke

On Friday 7th February, we had a 'Wear Red Day' to raise money for Northern Ireland Chest, Heart and Stroke. A total of £208.00 was raised for this charity. Thank you for your support and generosity. We look forward to welcoming some representatives from Northern Ireland Chest, Heart and Stroke in Term 3. The representatives will deliver the 'Heartley's Heroes' programme. The programme aims to help young people stay healthy and active.

Year 1 Trip to Play Away

On Monday 3rd February Year 1 visited PlayAway in Portadown. The children had lots of fun taking part in various play based activities and learning about 'Space'. We were also

very proud of all the children having received very positive comments about their behaviour during our visit. Well done Year 1!

Year 7 Young Enterprise Business Beginnings

Year 7 are currently participating in a series of lessons about setting up a mini business. Two volunteers from Kingspan, Portadown have been helping them out and telling them about their roles in their worldwide company. The pupils have been learning about all the different job roles there are within a business from finance team, design team, product testing etc. They have had a chance to investigate what qualities are needed for each role and a chance to think which might suit their own qualities and skills. They have been learning about interview techniques. They will use this knowledge to set up their own mini business within school.

Year 7 Trip to Stormont

On Friday 21st February, Year 7 pupils visited the Northern Ireland Assembly Buildings at Stormont. They learned about what happens in Stormont and how the politicians run the country. They were in the chambers and had a chance to have a debate on school uniform and a consequent vote. It was a very informative visit.

Year 5 Egyptian Trip to Navan Centre

On Thursday 27th February Year 5 travelled to the Navan Centre for an Egyptian themed trip. We started the day with interactive activities about the origins of ancient Egyptians. We looked at a world map to locate Egypt and discussed the importance of the River Nile. We created a timeline from BC to AD of key events in Ancient Egyptian times. We then moved rooms, where we met an Egyptian farmer and one of his slaves. They told us all about Egyptian houses, the farming seasons and showed us a variety of crops which they had grown. They even showed us objects which they would use including an oddly shaped pillow and a stool to use the toilet! We then got to design and make our very own Egyptian crowns. Following this the children participated in a workshop about Egyptian gods. We even got to act out stories about them! The highlight of our trip was the exploration of the mummification process using a specially designed "mummy organs" costume. We even turned Eli into an Egyptian mummy! We had a super day at the Navan Centre.

Pupil Council Visit to Civic Centre

Our Pupil Council visited the Civic Centre on Friday 28th February and met the Mayor of ABC Council, Councillor Sarah Duffy. Pupils were given a tour of the Council Chamber and Mayor's Parlour and got to ask lots of questions about how our Council operates and the role of the Mayor. They even got to try on the robes and wear the Mayor's Chain. The visit finished with some refreshments. The pupils greatly enjoyed their visit and who knows some of them may end up being councillors of the future!

Judo Taster Sessions

Key Stage 2 pupils took part in a Judo Taster session on Monday 24th February and will be taking part in another session on Monday 3rd March. This has been organised by the Drumcree Community Centre. The pupils thoroughly enjoyed the experience and the judo coach was highly impressed with the way the boys and girls have adapted to the basic skills of judo.

Nursery News

People Who Help Us Topic

We would like to thank all the wonderful visitors who took the time to come into Nursery and talk to the children about their jobs. A special thanks to the police officers, opticians, nurse, hairdresser and personal coach who shared their knowledge and experience with us. The children truly enjoyed learning about their jobs and how they help others every day.

New Outdoor Play Area

Thanks to the sponsorship money raised from our Welly Boot Walk we now have a wonderful space where our children can build and explore, The Construction Area, complete with stones, dumper trucks, diggers and shovels. Thank you to Connor and Kelan from S Magee contractors for constructing this area for the Nursery children.

Class & Group Photos

These were taken on Monday 24th February by our Photographer Dandelion from Studio and all codes will be issued shortly to allow you to order these online. Please note, photos cannot be ordered through the school, all orders must be placed online.

Parent/Teacher Telephone Consultations

A reminder that Parent/Teacher Consultations will take place during the week Monday 10th March – Friday 14th March 2024. You will have received your date and time and we would encourage you to attend as this is a vital part of partnership with parents. To facilitate these, school will finish early all week as follows:

- Nursery: 12.30pm
- Yrs 1 – 4 & Junior LSC: 12.45pm
- Yrs 5 – 7 & Senior LSC: 1pm

Reading Week

We have been thoroughly enjoying our Reading Week Competition. Children in Year 4, 5, 6 and 7 have been trying to read lots of words in Accelerated Reader. The class with the highest number of words read in Accelerated Reader at the end of the week will win a prize. Children in Years 1, 2 and 3 have been reading books at home and receiving stamps in school. The class with the most stamps on their stamp sheet at the end of the week will also win a prize. Prizes include a hot chocolate party, a trip to the park or a popcorn and movie afternoon. Let's keep reading!

World Book Day

World Book Day is on Thursday 6th March. It will be filled with lots of exciting, celebratory ways to promote reading for pleasure on World Book Day and all-year round. Children will be encouraged to come to school dressed as their favourite book character. Your child has already received their World Book Day Token and these can be spent in the following retailers: Asda, Sainsburys, Tesco, The Works, Waterstones or WHSmith.
Clubs

Schools of Sanctuary

This year Ballyoran Primary School have been working towards the Schools of Sanctuary Award. Schools of Sanctuary are schools that ensure every child feels safe and accepted regardless of what they believe, where they are from or what they look like; schools where cultural diversity is valued and celebrated.

LSC Names and SENCo Title

As you will be aware we have two Learning Support Classes in school, schools with this provision have been advised by EA to move away from these names so our Learning support classes will now be known as:

- Junior LSC will be the **Caterpillar Room** and Mrs McCullough's Class
- Senior LSC will be the **Butterfly Room** and Mr Hendron's Class

The term LSC will no longer be used for these classes.

Schools have also been directed to change the title of SENCo (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator) to Learning Support Co-ordinator, so Mrs McGuire will now be Learning Support Co-ordinator (LSC) instead of SENCo. Mrs Somerville is our Assistant Learning Support Co-ordinator.

Attendance

A reminder that pupils should be in school every day, unless they are sick or have a medical appointment. Educational attainment is closely linked to attendance and your child will only reach their full potential if they are in school every day.

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

- Foundation/Key Stage 1: Year 3 with 94.8%
- Key Stage 2: Mr Hendron's class with an amazing 98.7%

A reminder that when a pupil is absent you must let the school know and provide us with a reason for absence, this can be done in a number of ways:

1. Phone call to the school and leave a message at Option 1 – remember you do not need to speak to the secretary
2. Email the secretary at wburrows556@c2ken.net
3. Send in an absence note

This is vitally important because if we do not get a reason for absence then it is recorded as 'No Reason' and will mean that you will receive phone calls and letters about attendance and you may even be referred to the EA Education Welfare Service.

Parent Pay Bookings

Parents can make bookings and pay for school dinners on Parent Pay up to 9am every morning. Thank you to all those who parents continue to book their children's school meals on ParentPay on a weekly basis. Please note that ParentPay is used to book the days which your child will take a school meal. If your child is on packed lunches or is off school, they should not be booked on for a school meal.

Coats Rule

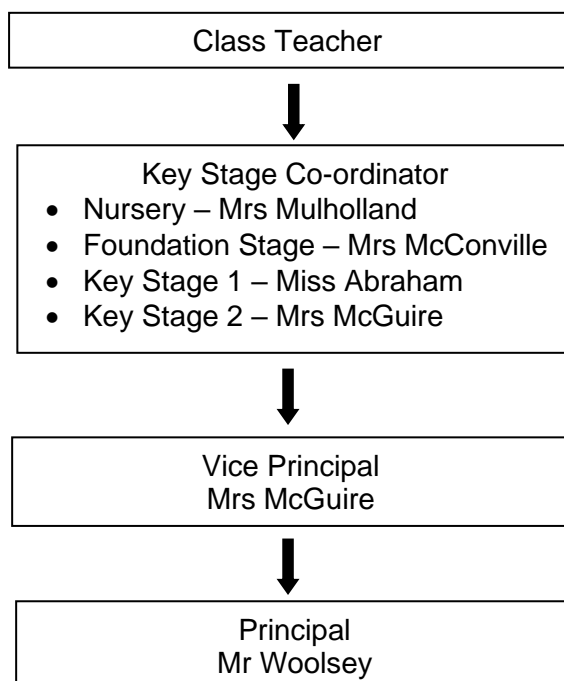
From Monday 3rd March the coats rule will be relaxed as we move into Spring. We would however encourage you to ensure that your child has a coat with them on cold or wet days.

Names on Clothing

Pupils frequently lose items of clothing in school and it is very difficult for staff to reunite lost items with pupils if there are no names on the item. With this in mind, I would ask that parents ensure that all items of school uniform and PE uniform have your child's name on them.

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:



Pupils Leaving School Early

We discourage pupils being removed from school early as this means they will miss out on valuable learning. If a child, however, needs to leave school early for any reason, a reminder that they **must** be collected from Reception by an **adult**. We are unable to allow pupils to walk home on their own and this policy will be strictly enforced.

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.

Term Dates & Holidays 2024/2025

We are still waiting for the EA to confirm holiday dates for next year, this will hopefully happen within the next few weeks

Menu

<https://tinyurl.com/2vdeub3u>

Thank you for your continued co-operation and support.

Richard Woolsey
Principal