



## **Start of Year News Sheet – September 2024**

### **Welcome Back**

We are delighted to have all our pupils back to school and a big welcome back to everyone for the 2024/2025 year. We trust that everyone had a pleasant and relaxing summer. A special welcome to all our new pupils, we hope that you settle into the school very quickly.

### **Parent Information Booklet 2024-25**

This has been made available to parents already through the school app and school website and should be read carefully. It can be accessed at: <https://primarysite-prod-sorted.s3.amazonaws.com/ballyoran-primary-school/UploadedDocument/d81e9767-ad4d-4e53-9982-8d50ae8c1565/parent-information-booklet-2024-2025.pdf>

### **Dismissal Times**

- Nursery: 1.30pm every day after settling in
- Year 1: 1.55pm every day from 9<sup>th</sup> September
- Year 2: 2pm every day
- Year 3: 3pm Mon – Wed  
2pm: Thurs & Fri
- Year 4: 3pm: Mon – Thurs  
2pm: Fri
- Year 5: 3pm every day
- Year 6: 3pm every day
- Year 7: 3pm every day
- Junior LSC: 1.50pm every day for Year 1 & 2 pupils
- Senior LSC: 2.50pm every day

### **Staffing**

Congratulations to Miss Baird who got married over the summer, she returns to school as Mrs Somerville.

Mrs Stevenson left Ballyoran at the end of August and we wish to place on record our thanks to her for all her hard work as our secretary over the last year and wish her well in her new job. Miss Duraes will be covering the office until a new secretary is appointed.

### **Class Fund - Yr 3-7 classes**

Schools are constantly having to work to very tight budgets. For the first time, we are asking parents for financial support to provide additional resources for the children in Year 3-7 classes. This contribution will allow the class teacher to purchase extra items that are needed in the classroom which are not immediately available from stock such as cooking and seasonal art materials. We are asking for £10 per child for the year and the money can be paid through ParentPay throughout the month of September. We are grateful for this additional revenue and we thank you for your support.

## Data Capture and Consent Forms

It is vital that we hold up-to-date information on every child in school. A small number of parents did not return these in June and we would ask that these are now returned as soon as possible.

## 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 2022/23 we had an average attendance of 87.9%. From the Department of Education guidance detailed below you can see that this falls into ‘Very Poor’ to ‘Poor’ category. While we appreciate that illness was a major factor in this, 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/36zrxv5e> .

<b>100% Attendance</b>	<b>0 Days Missed</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
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 7 Weeks and 3 days of Learning Missed	Unacceptable
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.

## Traffic Management Scheme

Thank you to the vast majority of parents who use our Traffic Management Scheme properly. A reminder that we operate a one-way system, with the only vehicle access to the school being the Ashgrove Road entrance, exiting via Ballyoran Park. A small number of parents are still driving up Ballyoran Park in the mornings and afternoons to collect pupils and we would appeal to them not to do this as it disrupts the smooth flow of traffic. Parents are asked to drive carefully in the school grounds adhering to the 5mph speed limit to ensure the safety of all members of our school community.

## Breakfast Club

The Breakfast Club is open to all pupils in Nursery – Year 7 daily in the Dinner Hall from 8.15 – 8.45am. The cost remains **£1.00** per day. Parents must sign a consent form and book for Breakfast Club by Midday every Friday for the following week, by emailing the secretary, [mduraes127@c2kni.net](mailto:mduraes127@c2kni.net)

### School Start Time: 8.55am

It is vitally important that your child is in school on time every morning. All pupils should be in school for 8.55am ready to start work at the 9am bell. A reminder that the gates open at 8.45am and no pupil should be on the school grounds before this as there is no supervision. If a child arrives after 9.00am they will be marked as late. Teachers will monitor punctuality and parents will be contacted if their child is persistently late.

### Parent Pay

A reminder that we are a cashless school and all payments must be made using Parent Pay. All school dinners free and paid must be booked on Parent Pay.

### Breaktime Snack

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.**

Year 3 – 7 pupils must bring 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.

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 margarine	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

### School Meals

School dinner prices remain as follows:

Nursery - £2.50 per day; £12.50 per week

Primary - £2.60 per day; £13.00 per week

We would encourage Dinner Money to be paid for the whole week **on parent Pay.**

**A reminder that school dinners must be paid for in advance.**

## **Free School Meals/Uniform Allowances**

A reminder that eligible parents must apply online for the new school year, even parents who were already in receipt of this last year.

**Making an application does not automatically entitle you to Free School Meals and you will have to pay for dinners until the application is approved by EA.**

**If you do not make an application or put your application in late, your child will have to pay for dinners until the EA approves the application.**

Applications must be made at <https://tinyurl.com/mrxms8bc>

## **Dinner Menu**

<https://tinyurl.com/yx4krfjb>

## **Smoking**

As you are aware, it is School Policy that smoking is not permitted within school grounds. Please note that this Policy also includes e-cigarettes.

## **Year 1 Induction**

Year 1 pupils will finish at 12.00pm on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> and Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September.

From Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> to Friday 6<sup>th</sup> September, Year 1 pupils will stay for lunch and finish school at 1.00pm.

From Monday 9<sup>th</sup> September. Year 1 will be in school for a full day, finishing school at 1.55pm.

Children will enter and leave school at the red Nursery gate. Year 1 parents are welcome to walk their child into school in the early days but we ask that you encourage your child to walk into school on their own as soon as possible.

## **Cycling to and from School**

Only pupils in Years 4 – 7, **wearing a cycling helmet** and who have returned a consent form are permitted to cycle to school and park their bikes at the front of the school.

## **Nuts**

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

## **Clubs**

We are in the process of organising after school clubs and information will be sent to parents via the App as soon as possible.

## **Sensory Room Fundraising Update**

We are very grateful to Stephanie McCool, Mum of Caelan and Ruadh for raising over £500 for our new Sensory Room. Stephanie ran the Hillsborough 10K race and was sponsored by many friends, family and staff. Thank you Stephanie.

Our current total raised is £3,970.00. We intend to plan events throughout the year in a bid to reach our target.

### **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.

### **Dogs**

A reminder that dogs (other than Guide Dogs) are not permitted on the school grounds for Health and Safety reasons.

### **Swimming**

Year 5 – 7 pupils will go to South Lakes Leisure Centre again this year on a rota basis. Swimming is a vital part of the Northern Ireland Curriculum for PE and therefore is not optional. We do not charge for swimming as many schools do. Please complete the consent form which will be sent home and return to school immediately.

### **Speaking to Teachers**

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 a note or email in or speak to the secretary who will pass the message on.

### **Term 1 Diary Dates – Advance Notice**

- 30<sup>th</sup> September School Closed for Staff Training
- 1<sup>st</sup> October School closed for Staff Training
- 3<sup>rd</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> October Book Fair
- 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> October School Photographs – Individual & Family Groups
- 21<sup>st</sup> October Flu Vaccinations
- 21<sup>st</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> October Parent/Teacher Meetings – school closes at 1pm
- 28<sup>th</sup> October – 1<sup>st</sup> November Half Term
- 11<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> November Anti Bullying Week
- 3<sup>rd</sup> December Yr – 7 Trip to 'Rapunzel' Pantomime in Armagh
- 6<sup>th</sup> December Canteen Christmas Dinner – pupils
- 11<sup>th</sup> December Nursery Christmas Performance
- 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> December Primary School Christmas Performances
- 13<sup>th</sup> December School finishes at 1pm for all pupils
- 20<sup>th</sup> December Last Day of Term 1 – School finishes at 12noon, no uniform and no dinners

### **School App**

It is important that all parents are using the school app as this is our main method of communication. A significant number of parents have still not downloaded it and are missing out on vital information. If you are not receiving messages or have any problems setting it up, please contact the office.

### **School Website**

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

