



Start of Year News Sheet – September 2023

Welcome Back

We are delighted to have all our pupils back to school and a big welcome back to everyone for the 2023/2024 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 2023-24

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://tinyurl.com/yxnab4uj>

New Traffic Management Scheme

Our new Traffic Management Scheme is finally operational and has been running smoothly so far. You will all agree that it has made a massive positive difference to the morning drop off and afternoon pick up experience. Parents are reminded to strictly adhere to the following guidance:

1. There are now two entrances to Ballyoran Primary School for pupils and parents:
 - New Pedestrian and Vehicle Entrance on Ashgrove Road
 - Pedestrian Entrance on Ballyoran Park
2. Any parents dropping off and collecting pupils by car **MUST** use the new Entrance on Ashgrove Road to enter the school grounds. If you are dropping off or picking up please use the drop off/pick up zones on the right. If you need to park to come into school, for example Nursery parents, please use the car parking spaces on the left. Parents driving to school **MUST** adhere to the new one way system entering via the new Ashgrove Road Gate and exiting via Ballyoran Park. **Parents should not drive up Ballyoran Park at any time as this will disrupt the flow of traffic in the one way system.**
3. The maximum speed limit in the school grounds is 5 mph.
4. Pupils who have walked to school should enter and leave via the Ballyoran Park Pedestrian gate or the new Ashgrove Road Pedestrian gate.
5. To ensure the safety of children and adults, everyone must remain on the footpaths at all times and use the appropriate Pedestrian crossings.
6. **PARENTS AND PUPILS SHOULD USE CAR PARK 1 ONLY AND MUST NOT ENTER CAR PARKS 2 OR 3 WHICH ARE FOR STAFF ONLY**
7. **Parents use the new car park and drop off and pick up zones at their own risk. The school will not accept responsibility for damage, accident or loss.**
8. We would again ask all parents with cars who are dropping off and picking up children to exercise caution inside and outside the school grounds as there have been a few near accidents involving pupils and other vehicles.

Dismissal Times

Staggered Dismissal Times are no longer in operation and all dismissal times have returned to what they were before the pandemic:

- Nursery: 1.30pm every day after settling in
- Year 1: 1.55pm every day from 11th 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
- LSC: 2.50pm every day

Staffing

We welcome Miss Murray and Miss McDonnell to the staff as new Classroom Assistants.

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. If you have mislaid the original form please contact Mrs Stevenson in the office for a new one.

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>.

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 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.

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 is **£1** per day. Parents must sign a consent form and book for Breakfast Club by Midday every Friday for the following week, by emailing ustevenson175@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. Teachers will also refer persistent late-comers to the Principal.

A reminder of our policy on collecting money

All money coming into school must be in an envelope with the following information clearly written on it: Child's Name, amount and what it is for eg. School Dinners. Also if the money is for dinners, it must clearly state the number of days and which days it is for. This policy ensures that teachers have more time to teach your child/ren as you will appreciate that counting and administering money is very time consuming.

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.**

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 a Monday**. Please put the money in a sealed envelope with the Child's Name, amount and what it is for written on it. **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>

Menu for Term 1

<https://tinyurl.com/4jvw3brn>

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 **12.30pm** daily for their Induction Day only but after that it is 1.30pm from **5th – 8th September** and 1.55pm from **Monday 11th September**. 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. A date will be set when we ask that Year 1 parents do not walk them in and you will receive a note about this in due course.

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

All After School Clubs/Activities remain paused due to staff Industrial Action.

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

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| • 25 th & 26 th September | School Closed for Staff Training |
| • 5 th – 11 th October | Book Fair |
| • 6 th October | Flu Vaccination |
| • 10 th October | School Photographs – Individual & Family Groups |
| • 23 rd – 27 th October | Parent/Teacher Meetings – school closes at 1pm |
| • 30 th October – 3 rd November | Half Term |
| • 13 th – 17 th November | Anti Bullying Week |
| • 8 th December | Canteen Christmas Dinner – pupils |
| • 12 th December | Nursery Christmas Performance |
| • 13 th & 14 th December | Primary School Christmas Performances |
| • 14 th December | School finishes at 1pm for all pupils |
| • 19 th December | Last Day of Term 1 – School finishes at 12noon, no uniform, 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 . Class Pages will be updated regularly giving parents a useful insight into what their children are doing in class.

