



Safeguarding Team

Principal & Designated Teacher:

Mrs McGuire

Deputy Designated Teachers:

Miss Somerville & Miss McKernan

Nursery Deputy Designated

Teacher: Miss French

Designated Governor: Mrs Sergeant

Chairperson: Mrs Loney

Start of Year News Sheet – September 2026

Welcome Back

We are delighted to welcome our wonderful pupils and families back to Ballyoran Primary School for the 2026/2027 academic year. We hope everyone enjoyed a restful, enjoyable summer break and is looking forward to the exciting year ahead.

A very special welcome is extended to all our new pupils and families joining our school community. We hope you settle in quickly and feel happy and supported as part of the Ballyoran family.

I am honoured and excited to begin this new chapter as Principal, having proudly served Ballyoran Primary School as Vice Principal for over 17 years. I look forward to working closely with our pupils, staff, parents, and wider community as we continue to provide the very best opportunities for every child to learn, grow, and succeed.

We wish everyone a happy and successful school year ahead.

Parent Information Booklet 2026 – 2027

Our Parent Information Booklet is now available to access, <https://tinyurl.com/mrxv39bh>.

We encourage all parents/carers to take a few moments to read this important information, which contains key details about school life.

Dismissal Times

- Nursery: 1.30pm every day after settling in
- Year 1: 1.55pm every day from 7th 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
- Caterpillar Room: Yrs 1 & 2: 8.55am – 1.50pm every day
Yr 3: 8.55am – 2.50pm Monday – Wed & 2pm on Thurs & Fri
Yr 4: 8.55am – 3pm: Mon– Thurs & 2pm on Fri
- Butterfly Room: Yr 4: 8.55am – 3pm: Mon– Thurs & 2pm on Fri
Yr 5 – 7: 2.50pm every day

Staffing

We are delighted to welcome several new members of staff to Ballyoran Primary School.

We are pleased to welcome four new teachers:

- Miss French, Nursery 1
- Miss Haughey, Caterpillar Room
- Miss McLennan, Year 3
- Miss McGirr, Butterfly Room

We also welcome five new Classroom Assistants: Miss Marley, Miss O'Kane, Miss Frazer, Miss Duraes and Mrs Haddock.

In addition, we are pleased to welcome Mrs Tennyson to our cleaning team and Mrs Smith to our canteen team.

Staff Changes

Mrs Somerville will teach in Year 2Mu on Tuesdays and in Year 7 on Wednesdays and Thursdays until the end of October.

Mrs McCool has been appointed as a permanent Classroom Assistant and will join Nursery 1, replacing Miss Dudek.

Miss Dudek will remain an important member of our school team, delivering Boosting Reading programmes and targeted interventions for individual pupils and small groups across the school. She will also lead our Breakfast Club.

We wish all our new and returning staff every success as we begin another exciting year at Ballyoran Primary School.

After School Clubs

Our After School Clubs will commence on Monday 7th September 2026. Please click on the link <https://tinyurl.com/2ae3sur5> to view the club timetable and available activities.

Payment can be made through ParentPay. We look forward to another exciting programme of clubs for our pupils.

Homework

Homework begins on **Monday 7th September.**

Class Fund - Yr 3 - 7 classes

We are again 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.

Website

Class pages on our school website, www.ballyoranps.com are updated regularly to provide parents with a valuable insight into the learning experiences and activities taking place in their children's classrooms.

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.

Attendance Matters

Every day a child is absent from school is a day of lost learning. Regular attendance is essential for academic progress, social development and overall wellbeing.

Attendance rates are reviewed monthly in partnership with the Educational Welfare Service (EWS). Pupils whose attendance falls below **85%** are automatically referred to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) for additional support and intervention.

The Department of Education booklet, ***School Attendance Matters: A Parent's Guide***, is available on our school website: <https://tinyurl.com/36zxrv5e>

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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

Important Reminders

- In line with Department of Education guidance, a pupil can only be awarded a present mark when they are in school.
- Good attendance and good punctuality go hand in hand. Children arriving after **9.00am** will be recorded as late.
- Establishing positive attendance habits from an early age helps children achieve their full potential.

Breakfast Club

Our Breakfast Club will be available from Day 1 for all pupils from Nursery to Year 7 and runs daily in the Dinner Hall from 8.15am to 8.45am. The cost remains £1.00 per day.

All Breakfast Club payments and bookings can be made through ParentPay. To help us plan staff and catering arrangements, we kindly ask that bookings for the following week are made by midday each Friday. Miss Dudek will lead and manage the Breakfast Club this year.

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.

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 butter	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

The EA have not informed us of any changes in school meal prices so prices remain as follows:

Nursery - £3 per day; £15 per week

Primary - £3.10 per day; £15.50 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/yc5ueycj>

Supporting Pupil Mental Health and Well-being

At Ballyoran Primary School, the mental health and well-being of our pupils continues to be a key priority. We are committed to supporting children who may be experiencing social, emotional or well-being difficulties and have a range of interventions available, including:

- Links Counselling
- Reach Mentoring
- Solas Mentoring
- Music Therapy
- RAISE Programme

Teachers may identify and refer pupils who would benefit from additional support through these programmes. Parents who feel their child may benefit from any of these interventions are encouraged to contact their child's class teacher to discuss their concerns.

By working together, we can ensure that every child feels supported, valued and ready to reach their full potential.

Smoking/Vaping

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

Year 1 Induction

- Tuesday 1st September and Wednesday 2nd September, all Year 1 pupils will start at 8.55am and finish at 12noon.
- Thursday 3rd to Friday 4th September, all Yr 1 pupils will stay for lunch and finish at 1pm.
- From Monday 7th September all Year 1 pupils 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.

Special Diets

If your child requires a special diet due to a medical condition (including allergies), religious or cultural reasons, or because they are vegetarian or vegan, please ensure a Special Diet Application Form is completed and returned to the school as soon as possible. For special diets required for medical or health reasons, the Special Diet Medical Form must be completed and signed by a medical consultant, GP or registered dietitian. This process helps us work closely with our Catering Team to ensure meals are provided safely and appropriately for your child. Please note that incomplete forms cannot be processed and may result in delays.

If you require a form or would like further information, please contact the school office.

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 on School Premises

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

Swimming

Year 5 to Year 7 pupils will attend South Lakes Leisure Centre again this year on a rota basis. Swimming is an important part of the Physical Education curriculum in Northern Ireland and, as such, participation is not optional. Unlike many schools, we do not charge for swimming lessons. Please complete and return the consent form, which will be sent home, as soon as possible to ensure your child can take part in the programme.

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.

Stay Connected with Ballyoran Primary School

Our new school app is now live! Please check your email and follow the instructions to set up the app. The new app will help you stay up to date with school news, newsletters, messages, events and important announcements. Thank you for your support and co-operation as we make this transition.

Term 1 Advance Dates

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| • 1 st September | Sensory Motor Group begins |
| • 7 th September | After School Clubs begin |
| • 25 th September | School Closed for Staff Training |
| • 28 th September | School Closed for Staff Training |
| • 1 st - 8 th October | Book Fair |
| • 19 th October | Flu Vaccinations |
| • 19 th – 23 rd October | Parent/Teacher Meetings – school closes at 1pm |
| • 26 th – 30 th October | Half Term |
| • 13 th November | Children in Need |
| • 16 th – 20 th November | Anti Bullying Week |
| • 1 st December | Yrs 3 – 7 Trip to 'Rapunzel' Pantomime in Armagh |
| • 4 th December | Canteen Christmas Dinner |
| • 7 th December | Yrs 1 – 2 Trip to Navan Centre (The Elf who lost Christmas' |
| • 9 th December | Nursery Christmas Performance |
| • 10 th & 11 th December | Primary School Christmas Performances |
| • 18 th December | Last Day of Term 1 – School finishes at 12noon,
no uniform and no dinners |

Thank you for your continued support and partnership. I look forward to working with you throughout the year as we continue to make Ballyoran Primary School a happy, inclusive and successful place for every child.

Best wishes to our entire school community for a positive, successful and rewarding year ahead.

Mrs Roisin McGuire
Principal

