



Safeguarding Team

Principal/Designated Teacher: Mrs McGuire
Deputy Designated Teachers: Miss McKernan & Mrs Somerville
Nursery Deputy Designated Teacher: Miss French
Designated Governor: Mrs Sergeant
Chairperson: Mrs Loney

News Sheet – October 2026

Settling In

We have enjoyed a fantastic start to the new school year, with our pupils settling in brilliantly and showing great enthusiasm and positive attitudes.

Thank you to our dedicated staff for their hard work and commitment, and to our parents and families for their continued support and cooperation.

As I complete my first month as Principal, it has been a privilege to work alongside such wonderful pupils, staff and families. I look forward to an exciting and successful year ahead.

Morning Punctuality

Thank you to all our parents and carers for your continued support in ensuring pupils arrive on time each day.

A gentle reminder that all pupils should be in school by **8.55am**, with gates and doors closing promptly at **9.00am**. Your support helps us provide a calm, positive start to the school day for all our children.

Year 1 Drop Off

Year 1 parents are reminded that from the start of October, in the mornings, all Year 1 pupils should walk to their class on their own.

Staffing Update

We are delighted to welcome Miss Carson (Year 3 Teacher), Mrs Fox (SEN Classroom Assistant, Caterpillar Room) and Miss Robalo (SEN Classroom Assistant, Nursery) to Ballyoran Primary School. We wish them every success in their new roles. We also say farewell to Mrs Adams, Classroom Assistant, and thank her for her contribution to the school over the past year. We wish her every success and happiness for the future.

Speech & Language Therapy Support

We are delighted to welcome Bekah Willis, Speech and Language Therapist, who is working in Ballyoran Primary School every Wednesday until June 2027 through RAISE funding.

This excellent initiative, secured for the five Portadown primary schools through the leadership of Mr Fox, Principal of Presentation Primary School, provides each school with dedicated speech and language therapy support one day per week.

This term, Bekah is working with Year 2 pupils, with Year 1 pupils benefiting later in the year. Support is provided through individual and small-group sessions, helping children develop their speech, language and communication skills.

We are extremely grateful for this valuable opportunity, which will have a positive impact on our pupils' learning, confidence and wellbeing.

Diary Dates – October 2026

1 st	Jo Jingles in Nursery, Year 1 and the Caterpillar Room
2 nd	8.45am: Yr1 Stay & Play Session Gaelic Blitz at Clonmore Book Fair Begins Launch of Christmas Shoebox Appeal at Assembly Launch of Key Stage 2 Reading Competition
6 th	Coding Lesson for Yr 7 pupils at St John the Baptist's College
8 th	Book Fair finishes
16 th	World Mental Health Day, Non-Uniform Day – Wear Yellow £1 per pupil Last day of Yr 7 swimming block
19 th	Flu Vaccinations
19 th – 23 rd	Parent/Teacher Meetings begin, school finishes early, no after school clubs
23 rd	Non-uniform Day - Dress Up in your favourite costume - £2 per pupil for our Playground Development
26 th – 30 th	School Closed for Half Term

Charity Events - Term 1

At Ballyoran Primary School, we are proud to support a range of worthwhile charities and fundraising initiatives. We would be grateful for your support in helping us make these events a success.

- Friday 9th October – Wear Yellow for Mental Health Day in aid of REACH Mentoring. Pupils are invited to wear yellow with a suggested donation of £1 per child.
- Friday 23rd October – Favourite Costume Day to support our Playground Development Fund. Pupils can dress up as their favourite character or in a fun costume (no scary costumes, please). Suggested donation: £2 per child.
- Friday 13th November – BBC Children in Need. Pupils can wear something bright or spotty and support our Bun Sale. Donations welcome.
- Monday 16th November – Odd Socks Day as part of Anti-Bullying Week. There is no cost involved; pupils simply wear odd socks to raise awareness of celebrating differences and promoting kindness.
- Samaritan's Purse Shoebox Appeal – Further details regarding collection dates will be shared soon. We encourage families to support this worthwhile initiative, which brings gifts and hope to children around the world.
- Christmas Party Day – Pupils can wear a Christmas jumper with a suggested donation of £1 per child in aid of Save the Children.

We would also like to thank staff who supported the Northern Ireland Hospice Coffee Morning during our staff training day on Friday 25th September, helping to raise funds for this important local charity.

Thank you for your continued generosity and support of these worthy causes. Together, we can make a positive difference in our community and beyond.

Year 6 Schools' Singing Programme

For the second year running, Ballyoran Primary School is delighted to be taking part in the Schools' Singing Programme. This exciting initiative helps children develop confidence, performance skills and a love of singing through whole-class sessions.

Our Year 6 pupils are participating this term and have already thoroughly two sessions. The programme will culminate in a special Advent Mass at St John the Baptist Church on Friday 4th December at 11.00am. Year 5 pupils will have the opportunity to take part during Term 2.

We look forward to seeing our pupils showcase their talents and celebrate all they have learned through this wonderful programme.

Gaelic Tournament at St John the Baptist's College

On Thursday 24th September, Year 6 and 7 pupils took part in a Gaelic tournament at St John the Baptist's College involving other local primary schools. The boys and girls really did themselves proud, both on the playing field and with their attitude and behaviour. Huge thanks to St John the Baptist's College for the excellent hospitality and organisation.

Fire Safety Visit for Year 5

On Monday 21st September, firefighters from Portadown Fire Station visited our Year 5 pupils to deliver an important and engaging session on fire safety. The children learned about planning a safe escape route from home, the importance of regularly checking smoke alarms, switching off electrical appliances at the socket, and avoiding overloaded plug sockets. The firefighters shared valuable advice to help keep families safe, and the pupils thoroughly enjoyed the visit while learning essential life-saving skills. We would like to thank the firefighters for taking the time to visit our school and support this important learning.

School Attendance – Every School Day Counts

Every single day a child is absent from school equates to a day of lost learning. As a whole school 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/49enzf7j>

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 as mentioned earlier.

All pupils arriving after the 9am bell will be marked as late.

Book Fair

This will take place from 2nd to 8th October 2026 in our library and more information will follow in due course.

Office

A reminder that our school office is open Monday to Thursday, 8.15am-4.00pm, and Friday, 8.15am-3.45pm. The office is closed daily during morning break (10.10am-10.25am) and lunch (1.15pm-1.45pm).

Our office team is experiencing a high volume of calls at present. If you are reporting an absence, please leave a message using Option 1. If your call is not answered immediately, this may be because the secretary is assisting another caller. Where appropriate, you may also contact the school by email at wburrows556@c2ken.net

Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Parent/Teacher Meetings

These will take place week beginning 19th October 2026. School will finish early every day during that week:

- Nursery: 12.45pm
- Yrs 1 – 2: 12.50pm
- Yrs 3 – 4: 12.55pm
- Yrs 5 – 7: 1pm
- Caterpillar Room & Butterfly Room: 12.45pm

Reply slips must be returned with the eldest in each family by **Monday 5th October 2026.**

Your appointment date and time will be sent home on **Wednesday 7th October 2026.**

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 at <https://www.ballyoranps.com/page/?title=Useful+Forms&pid=80>

School Meals/Dinner Money

Please note the price for school dinners is:

Nursery - £2.50 per day; £12.50 per week

Primary - £2.60 per day; £13.00 per week

All school meals payments must be made using ParentPay

Free School Meals

A reminder that all eligible parents must submit a new Free School Meals application each school year, even if their child received Free School Meals last year.

Please note that, until your application has been approved by the Education Authority, school meals must be paid for. We encourage families to apply as soon as possible to avoid any disruption.

Thank you for your support.

Food Allergies & Special Diets

To help keep all our pupils safe, please ensure the school is informed of any food allergies or special dietary requirements. If your child develops an allergy during the school year, please notify the school as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

If your child requires a special diet, please complete the relevant forms available on our website and return them to school: [School Meals Information](#).

Thank you for helping us ensure the safety and wellbeing of all our pupils.

No Nuts Policy

A reminder that Ballyoran Primary School is a **Nut-Free School**. Please do not send foods containing nuts into school to help keep all our children safe. Thank you for your support.

Fizzy Drinks

A reminder that as part of our Healthy Schools Policy, we do not permit pupils to bring fizzy drinks into school.

Smoking/Vaping

As you are aware, it is School Policy that smoking including e-cigarettes and vaping is not permitted within school grounds.

First Aid

The health, safety and wellbeing of our pupils is a top priority. Ballyoran Primary School currently has eight trained First Aiders:

- Miss Wilson (First Aid Co-ordinator)
- Mrs Muldrew
- Mrs McDonnell
- Miss Murray
- Mrs Reid
- Mrs Nellins
- Mrs Stewart
- Miss Dudek

Breakfast Club

All pupils are welcome to attend in the Dinner Hall from 8.15 – 8.45am. The cost is £1 per day. Parents must book and pay for Breakfast Club on Parent Pay.

Mental Health & Wellbeing

At Ballyoran Primary School, the mental health and wellbeing of our pupils is a key priority. We offer a range of support programmes, including Solas Mentoring, Reach Mentoring, Links Counselling, Music Therapy and RAISE: Beyond the Bell Mentoring.

If you feel your child would benefit from any of these supports, please contact their class teacher.

After School Clubs

Our After School Clubs are proving very popular, with pupils enjoying Gaelic, Art & Craft, Irish Dancing, Minecraft and Lego each week.

Breaktime Snack: Nursery – Year 2

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.**

Yr 3–7 Class Funds

Thank you to all parents who have already paid the £10 Class Fund contribution for pupils in Years 3-7. If you have not yet done so, we would be grateful if payment could be made via ParentPay as soon as possible. Thank you for your continued support

Healthy Breaks (Years 3-7)

As part of our Healthy Breaks Policy, pupils in Years 3-7 should bring a healthy snack such as fruit, vegetables, bread products or yogurt for break time.

Please remember that **crisps, sweets, chocolate, cakes and fizzy drinks are not permitted** at break time. Thank you for your support in helping us promote healthy habits across the school. For more information, please visit our Healthy Choices guide: [Healthy Choices](#).

Dogs

A reminder that dogs are not permitted on the school grounds for Health and Safety reasons.

Swimming

Swimming lessons for Years 5-7 will take place on Fridays at South Lake Leisure Centre. Classes will attend on a rota basis throughout the year, with Year 7 pupils currently taking part.

Swimming is provided **free of charge** and forms an important part of the school curriculum.

House System

Our House System continues to be a great success, with all pupils belonging to one of three houses: Bann, Lagan or Foyle. Pupils earn points for positive behaviour, effort and good manners, with scores updated each week and shared during assembly. The monthly winning house is announced in assembly and presented with the House Cup and a special prize. This friendly competition promotes teamwork, school spirit and our school values.

Congratulations to the following Yr 6 and 7 pupils who have been elected as Captains and Vice Captains this year.

Bann	Foyle	Lagan
Captain: Cerys Eadie	Captain: Nicole Poliakova	Captain: Emilie Lawless
Vice-Captain: Noah McStravick	Vice-Captain: Natan Michalik	Vice-Captain: Junior McGeown

Pupil Council

Congratulations to our new Pupil Council for this year:

Class	Pupils
Yr 4	Amara Hanratty and Edin Blevins
Yr 5	Conor Hamilton and Haley Corkin
Yr 6	Livia Varela and Carlos Da Veiga
Yr 7	Elisabeth Sergeant & Oscar Da Silva
Butterfly Room	Sean-Og McConaghy and Winnie McNally

Digital Leaders

Well done to our Digital Leaders for this year:

Class	Pupils
Yr 3	Milo McConville and Aodhan McGeough
Yr 4	Oisin Calvert and Sophia Poliakova
Yr 5	Haley Corkin and Leah Nosal
Yr 6	Natan Michalik and Dylan Mulholland
Yr 7	Elisabeth Sergeant and Oliwier Rozynek

Playground Friends

Our Year 7 Playground Friends have now been appointed and are already carrying out their important role, helping younger pupils, promoting positive play, and supporting friendships across the school. We are very proud of the responsibility and leadership they are showing.

School App

Our new **School App** is now operational. If you are experiencing any difficulties accessing the app, please contact the school office to ensure we have the correct email address for you. Thank you for your patience and support.

Parent Information Booklet

A reminder that the **Parent Information Booklet** was shared with all families via the School App at the start of term. We ask that all parents and carers take time to read this important document, as it contains key information and procedures for the school year.

View the Parent Information Booklet:

<https://ballyoranprimary.ovw4.juniperwebsites.co.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=837&type=pdf>

School Website

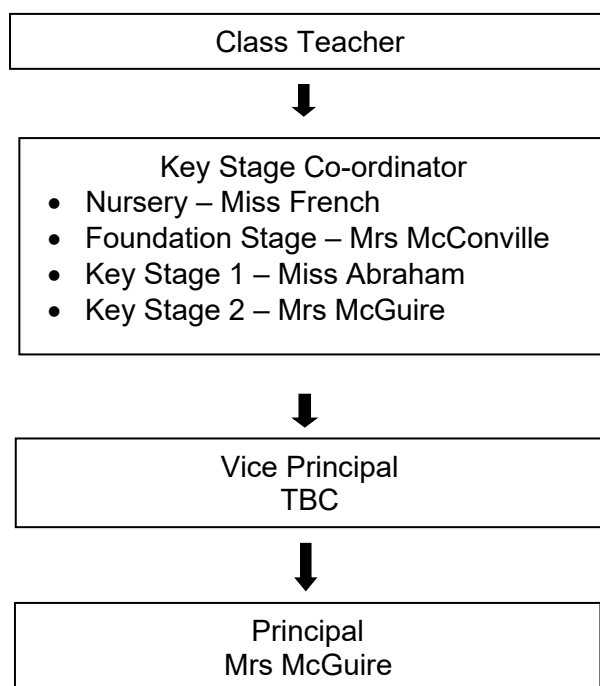
Keep up to date with the latest school news, events and information by visiting our school website, **www.ballyoranps.com**. Class pages are updated regularly, giving parents and carers a wonderful insight into their child's learning and achievements in school.

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:



Picking Pupils Up

To help children feel safe and secure at the end of the school day, we kindly ask parents and carers to collect pupils promptly. If you are running late, please contact the school office so we can reassure your child. Thank you for your support and cooperation.

Emergency Contact Details

Please ensure that the school always has up-to-date contact information, including telephone numbers, addresses and medical details. If any of these change during the year, please inform the school office as soon as possible. Having accurate emergency contact details helps us keep your child safe and ensures we can contact you quickly if needed.

New School Dinner Menu

The EA have published a new menu for October onwards and it can be found at:

<https://ballyoranprimary.ovw4.juniperwebsites.co.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=836&type=pdf>

Thank you for your continued support and co-operation.

Mrs Roisin McGuire
Principal

