



BALLYLIFFORD PS

NEWSLETTER

September - 2020



WELCOME BACK EVERYONE

Welcome back everyone to a new school year at Ballylifford Primary School. In particular, we would like to welcome our 10 Primary 1 pupils. They have been absolutely brilliant and have settled in really well to life at Ballylifford. As all the children return after almost 6 months off, we have been delighted to see their smiling faces as they come back to school. Procedures and routines have changed for everyone, but getting the children in safely to school to continue their education, social well-being and friendships is of vital importance. We are committed to ensuring all children are safe and happy coming to school and we will continue to follow guidelines outlined by the Public Health Agency.

SCHOOL UNIFORMS

The children as always look super in their school uniforms and a big thank you to all parents / guardians for supporting our uniform guidelines. In the interests of safety, girls should not wear hooped or dangling earrings as they can catch all too easily during play-time. It is absolutely vital **your child's name should be clearly marked on ALL clothing and personal belongings.**

Any lost items are stored in our lost property box and you can contact the school office if your child/children have lost any items.

The name tags from www.mynametags.com have been highly recommended to help label all belongings.

Children are allowed to wear their school PE clothing on their allocated PE days and every Friday to support families follow the clean uniform guidelines for COVID. Our School PE clothing & half zips will be available to purchase in O'Neill's Magherafelt in the next few weeks. The school will not be responsible for taking any orders and there will also mean a small increase in price of all items. Further details will be issued ASAP.

FREE SCHOOL MEALS & UNIFORM GRANTS

School dinners cost £2.60 per day (£13.00 per week) this year and the price has been put in place by the Education Authority.

You can earn up to £16,190 per year and still be entitled to Free School Meals. To find out if you qualify for Free School Meals, please check the Education Authority website.

We would urge any parent who was in receipt of Free School Meals last year to ensure that they have reapplied for Free Meals this year if entitled to do so. Free Meals need to be applied for each year.

LETTER FROM CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER

The Chief Medical Officer has written a letter to parents that outlines actions which should be taken by parents and carers if their children develop Covid-19 symptoms.

A leaflet for parents/carers has also been issued with advice on the steps to take if a child or anyone they live with develops symptoms. Please keep this safe for reference.

The letter and leaflet have also been published on the Education Restart section of the Department's website.

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS & CARERS

Everyone has a role to play in keeping our schools safe and helping to stop the spread of COVID-19.

YOU SHOULD BOOK A COVID-19 TEST IF YOUR CHILD HAS:

- A HIGH TEMPERATURE**
This means they feel hot to touch or their chest is hot. You do not need to measure their temperature.
- A NEW CONTINUOUS COUGH**
This means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 10 more coughing episodes in 24 hours if they usually have a cough. A dry or wet cough counts.
- A LOSS OR CHANGE TO THEIR SENSE OF SMELL OR TASTE**
This means they notice they cannot smell or taste anything, or things don't seem as different to normal.

IF YOUR CHILD DOES NOT HAVE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19 BUT HAS OTHER COLD-LIKE SYMPTOMS, SUCH AS A RUNNY NOSE, THEY DO NOT NEED TO BE TESTED AND THEY OR MEMBERS OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD DO NOT NEED TO SELF-ISOLATE. YOUR CHILD CAN ATTEND SCHOOL IF FIT TO DO SO.

HERE'S WHAT TO DO IF:

- YOUR CHILD HAS COVID-19 SYMPTOMS**
WHAT TO DO:
- DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL.
- Book a COVID-19 test.
- Household self-isolate.
- Inform school immediately about test result.
WHEN CAN MY CHILD RETURN?
Your child can return to school if the test is negative and they have not been ill for 10 days and if they haven't been advised to self-isolate by the HSE Contact Tracing Service.
- YOUR CHILD TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19 SYMPTOMS**
WHAT TO DO:
- DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL.
- The household should self-isolate.
- Household self-isolate.
- Inform school immediately about test result.
WHEN CAN MY CHILD RETURN?
Your child can return to school if the test is negative and they have not been ill for 10 days and if they haven't been advised to self-isolate by the HSE Contact Tracing Service.
- SOMEONE IN MY HOUSEHOLD HAS COVID-19 SYMPTOMS**
WHAT TO DO:
- DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL.
- The household should self-isolate.
- Household self-isolate.
- Inform school immediately about test result.
WHEN CAN MY CHILD RETURN?
Your child can return to school if the test is negative and they have not been ill for 10 days and if they haven't been advised to self-isolate by the HSE Contact Tracing Service.
- SOMEONE IN MY HOUSEHOLD TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19**
WHAT TO DO:
- DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL.
- The household should self-isolate.
- Household self-isolate.
- Inform school immediately about test result.
WHEN CAN MY CHILD RETURN?
Your child can return to school if the test is negative and they have not been ill for 10 days and if they haven't been advised to self-isolate by the HSE Contact Tracing Service.

CONTACT TRACING HAS IDENTIFIED MY CHILD AS A CLOSE CONTACT
WHAT TO DO:
- DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL.
- Self-isolate for 10 days if they have not been ill for 10 days and if they haven't been advised to self-isolate by the HSE Contact Tracing Service.
WHEN CAN MY CHILD RETURN?
Your child can return to school if the test is negative and they have not been ill for 10 days and if they haven't been advised to self-isolate by the HSE Contact Tracing Service.

YOUR CHILD HAS BEEN IN CONTACT WITH SOMEONE IDENTIFIED AS A CLOSE CONTACT
WHAT TO DO:
- DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL.
- Self-isolate for 10 days if they have not been ill for 10 days and if they haven't been advised to self-isolate by the HSE Contact Tracing Service.
WHEN CAN MY CHILD RETURN?
Your child can return to school if the test is negative and they have not been ill for 10 days and if they haven't been advised to self-isolate by the HSE Contact Tracing Service.

YOUR CHILD HAS TRAVELLED ABROAD AND BEEN ADVISED TO SELF-ISOLATE
WHAT TO DO:
- DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL.
- Self-isolate for 10 days if they have not been ill for 10 days and if they haven't been advised to self-isolate by the HSE Contact Tracing Service.
WHEN CAN MY CHILD RETURN?
Your child can return to school if the test is negative and they have not been ill for 10 days and if they haven't been advised to self-isolate by the HSE Contact Tracing Service.

IF YOUR CHILD HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AS A CLOSE CONTACT OF A CASE OF COVID-19, OR HAS RETURNED FROM A TRIP TO A HIGH-RISK COUNTRY, THEY MUST SELF-ISOLATE FOR 10 DAYS REGARDLESS OF WHETHER COVID-19 SYMPTOMS ARE PRESENT.

Further information, including a letter to parents and carers, can be found on the Department of Education's website at www.education.ie.

EDUCATION RESTART

WE ALL HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY IN STOPPING COVID-19

HSC Public Health Agency | Department of Education | www.education.ie

STAFF CAR PARK & ROAD SAFETY

For morning arrival/drop off parents/guardians/childminders are free to use school car park but must drive **slowly, carefully and responsibly**, showing regard at all times.

To help avoid any congestion in the school car park, there will be **NO** parking allowed in the staff car park at afternoon/home collection times. Only one gate will remain open to allow pedestrian access for parents/carers/family to collect the children from the playground.

Please do not congregate in groups and socially distance from others at all times. Collect your child and move swiftly to your vehicle with awareness of other adults and children in the area.

SCHOOL BUS PARKING

Can we ask all parents / guardians to please refrain from parking at the blue entrance gates or on the footpath in front of the school. The School Bus has priority for parking here to ensure children get on the bus in the afternoon safely. It also means that the bus can depart the school site promptly to collect pupils at other locations.

This is particularly important with regard to the safety of all the whole school community. We are very grateful for your co-operation.

Thank you for co-operation.

CREDIT UNION

The Credit Union Savings Scheme will run in school every Tuesday morning beginning in October. Credit Union books will be collected each Tuesday and returned on Friday for those children who wish to participate in the scheme. The children will be asked to use the clear plastic wallet provided by the Credit Union and we encourage all parents to wipe the wallets at all times.

All new members are welcome. Any parents interested in opening a savings account can obtain further information by contacting Ballinderry Credit Union Office on (028) 7941 8555.

HEAD LICE

We would encourage all parents to check your child's hair regularly as outbreaks of head lice are very common at this stage of the year. It is vitally important that it is treated promptly and with a lotion (not shampoo). Should you require any advice, please contact your local pharmacist.

HEALTHY BREAK & LUNCH POLICY

We ask all parents to please pack a healthy snack for break time and as part of our Healthy Break Policy we would encourage you to select items from the following list for your child to eat / drink at break time:

- Milk / Water
- Fruit / Vegetables / Vegetable sticks
- Plain biscuits -Rich Tea, Digestives, Crackers etc.
- Any bread based products e.g. sandwiches, pancakes or scones.(Butter or spread can be used, avoid sugary spreads such as jam, marmalade and chocolate spread)

Children are encouraged to bring a healthy lunch to school every day along with a bottle of water.

Drinking water is an essential part of a healthy lifestyle and has been shown to make the brain more receptive to learning. Children may bring their water in a small, plastic bottle as they will be given opportunities to drink throughout the day.

NUT ALLERGY / FOOD ALLERGIES

We would like to remind parents/guardians of the seriousness of NUT / FOOD ALLERGY conditions and we would encourage that no foods containing nuts or that may contain traces of nuts / nut products, such as peanut butter or nutella sandwiches, etc be brought into school. We would also like to advise parents / guardians to refrain from sending birthday cakes / buns into school. Your co-operation supports the school in monitoring the situation and protects the well-being of all our pupils and staff.

MEDICATION

If your child requires prescribed or non-prescribed medication during the school day, parents must provide written and signed instructions by completing the AM2 form which is available from the school office.

FLU VACCINE

All pupils will receive their letters regarding the delivery of the Flu Vaccines by the school nurses which will take place on the Wednesday 21st October. If you do not wish your child to get this vaccine, a form still needs to be completed and returned to the school. Vaccine has to be returned for the non-returned forms as well.

SCHOOL POLICIES

A summary of all Policies are available to view on our school website. As part of our consultation procedures we would like to remind parents that all policies linked to Child Protection are available to view online using our school website and on request from the school office.

This includes arrangements for Child Protection, Internet Safety, Pastoral Care and Positive Behaviour.

CHILD PROTECTION / PASTORAL CARE

At the beginning of each new academic year, class teachers always revise the pastoral care arrangements with children and remind them of whom they can talk to if they have any concerns or worries.

In school we talk to all the children, particularly about our school safeguarding team, school safety net and Worry Box. These are on display in school and will be reinforced throughout the school year. Please contact Mrs. Sweeney (designated teacher for child protection) or Ms Hurl (deputy designated teacher for child protection) should you wish to raise a child protection issue. A copy of all Child Protection information & 'Parent's Awareness Leaflet' are sent home with each family in September and is also available to view on our school website.

NEWSLETTERS/SCHOOL INFORMATION

As individual reminders for all dates and events cannot always be sent home, please ensure that you retain **ALL** Newsletters/School Information letters for your reference. **It is important that parents check homework sacks regularly in for general notes, reminders, newsletters, that are sent home.**

The Newsletter will always be made available on the school website www.ballyliffordps.com or you can follow us on Twitter-@BallyliffordPS

We ask all parents and family members to also ensure you have downloaded the 'SCHOOL NI' APP to view all school updates.

PUPIL AWARDS

At Ballylifford PS, we like to acknowledge and recognise the pupils' positive behaviour, application and attitude to school life by having various awards.

Weekly Pupil Award certificates & School Values Cup will continue to be presented to pupils who have followed the Golden Rules and School Values really well for that week. These awards will be presented by their class teachers to the pupils within their particular Key Stage.

The certificates will be taken home by the pupils and School Values cup will remain in school and kept on the pupil's desk for one week.

Pupil of the Month certificates will continue to be awarded to each year group and will be presented to the pupils by Mr McElroy.

'**Super Literacy**' and '**Super Numeracy**' certificates will also be presented monthly to acknowledge their positive learning in both curriculum areas will be presented at the end of the month.

All photos of the children receiving awards will be uploaded to our school website weekly and monthly.

HEALTH & WELL-BEING

As part of our programme to support our community back to school we have organised a wellbeing programme for the whole school community.

Along with the local Loughshore cluster schools, we have organised Cormac from HIP Psychology to deliver a programme with P5 - P7 pupils on Tuesday 29th September and for parents on 30th September (more details to follow). All staff received training in August as part of the programme. We are currently arranging a support programme for P1 - P4 pupils.

We feel it is hugely important to support everyone as we return to the new normal following lockdown. The children have been brilliant coming back to school and we want to ensure we support their resilience and well-being.

PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

We pride ourselves in Ballylifford PS as having a high level of Pastoral Care and we always want our children to learn in an environment which is supportive, encouraging and structured.

In order for learning to be effective, good discipline and positive behaviour is essential. In school we have a number of mottos, Golden Rules and we have an established system of rewards which promotes positive behaviour and we would like the pupils to maintain their excellent attitude and application to their learning. However, in order to maintain our excellent standard, it is also necessary to have effective sanctions in place; a sheet outlining the discipline plan for each year group has been issued to all pupils.

Major breaches of discipline may result in loss of playtime at break or lunch time or a behaviour reflection sheet will be sent home with pupils for parents to sign.

As a Catholic school, we wish to help children understand that we all make mistakes and do the wrong thing sometimes but that saying sorry, trying to put mistakes right and accepting appropriate consequences with good grace are part of learning and growing up and, once over, mistakes are forgiven and forgotten.

SCHOOL GOLDEN RULES



BALLYLIFFORD SCHOOL VALUES

Welcome
Learning Respect
Nurture Achievement
Empathy

ANTI-BULLYING WEEK

The Anti-Bullying Week 2020 theme is **"United Against Bullying"**.

Anti-Bullying week is the week beginning 16th November. Children in all year groups will be concentrating on the definition, causes and effects of bullying and discussing anti-bullying strategies and procedures. This will involve activities to promote anti-bullying across the curriculum. If you have concerns that your child may be being bullied, it is important that you talk to class teachers at an early stage. Concerns of a serious nature should be raised with our Safeguarding team of Mrs. Sweeney (Designated Teacher) or Ms Hurl (Deputy Designated Teacher), Mr McElroy (Principal)

Bullying is an issue which is taken very seriously and all incidents will be dealt with as outlined in our Anti-Bullying Policy. We also have **OUR SCHOOL SAFETY NET** and our **'WORRY BOX'** through our Anti-Bullying Procedures to make all pupils aware if they have any concerns or worries that **ALL** staff in school are there to help.

Our Anti-Bullying Ambassadors will help educate their peers on bullying, lead on anti-bullying campaigns, promote a culture which celebrates and tolerates difference and help keep their peers safe both online and offline.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

First Communion for our current Primary 5 children will take place on **Sunday 20th September at 12:00noon.**

SCHOOL CLOSURE

Please note that school will be closed for all pupils on **Monday 28th September**. This day is to facilitate staff development.

P7 TRANSFER CLUB

P7 Transfer Club will commence again for P7 pupils on 16th September with Mr McElroy on Wednesday afternoons from 3-4:15pm.

NO SACRAMENTAL DATES HAVE BEEN CONFIRMED FOR 2021 AS YET BUT PARENTS WILL BE NOTIFIED ASAP
