



BIRCHES PRIMARY SCHOOL

Newsletter

September / October 2021



Dear Parents,

We have received updated guidance for our return to school from the Department of Education.

As a result, we are retaining many of the procedures we had in place during the last term in 2020/2021.

School Procedures regarding Covid-19

As the Covid-19 virus is still present within our community, it is important that we retain a degree of flexibility with our planning so that we can best meet any issues that may arise as we return to school. We hope that with your continued cooperation over the coming months we will reduce the impact it has on our school community. All procedures will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

Covid-19 Prevention

- It is essential that all children are reminded of the importance of personal hygiene as they return to school, particularly around the importance of regular handwashing.
- Children will be asked by staff to wash their hands regularly throughout the school day.
- School staff may wear PPE such as visors, aprons or gloves if they are required to work in close proximity with a child or to perform first aid if required.
- The children will also be instructed to follow good respiratory hygiene, following the principle of 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it' and will be discouraged from touching their eyes, face, nose and mouth.
- If your child is displaying any of the symptoms of Covid-19, they should stay at home and follow the latest Public Health advice. Symptoms include: raised temperature, persistent cough, loss of taste and loss of smell.
- If any child presents as unwell, parents/ guardians will be contacted.
- If any child displays symptoms of Covid-19, they, and any members of their household within the school setting, will be sent home from school and advised to follow the PHA guidance.
- If there is a confirmed case of someone in the school having the Covid-19 virus the school will follow the latest PHA and DE guidance.

DE Letter to Parents/Carers

- A letter to all parents/carers from our Education Minister Michelle McIlveen MLA is on our school website under Parents and Letters.

DE Information Poster for Parents/Carers

- DE have sent information for parents which can be found on our website under Parents and Letters called 'Parents Dos and Don'ts Poster'

Communication

The school will keep parents informed of any developments in relation to Covid-19.

Lines of communication:

- School website www.birchesps.com
- Seesaw
- Text messages – Please ensure you can access the school texting service and if you have any difficulties, please contact the school office ineill722@c2kni.net
- E-mail

Email addresses

P1	Mrs Morrow	cmorrow528@c2kni.net
P2	Mrs Greer	jgreer521@c2kni.net
	Mrs K Patterson	kpatterson388@c2kni.net
P3	Mrs Boyd	jboyd601@c2kni.net
P4	Mrs Dunlop	cdunlop764@c2kni.net
P5	Mrs R Patterson	rpatterson275@c2kni.net
	Mrs K Patterson	kpatterson388@c2kni.net
P6	Mrs Galway	agalway951@c2kni.net
P7	Miss Gillespie	bgillespie517@c2kni.net
Principal	Mrs Watson	pwatson676@c2kni.net

Car Park - HEALTH AND SAFETY

I would like to ask everyone to remain vigilant when you are dropping off / collecting your child from school.

All adults and children are to use the designated and clearly marked out pedestrian areas.

Children exiting the car are then able to walk along the pedestrian areas - they are not to cross the car park.

As the safety of our children is of paramount importance, please ensure that you drive safely, slowly and carefully. Please ensure that you pass on the relevant information to whoever is dropping off / collecting your child from school.

Drop Off and Collection Times

We have staggered times to avoid congestion and large gatherings in the car park.

All children in the same family can be dropped off at the same time as their eldest sibling (they can come in through the same entrance).

- **Tuesday 31 August**

8.30 – 8.45am to 12.00pm	P4 and P5 Entrance through side gate C (Robinsonstown)
	P6 and P7 Entrance through the main door
8.45 – 9.00am to 11.45pm	P1 Entrance through side gate C (Robinsonstown)
	P2 and P3 Entrance through the main door

- **Wednesday 1st September onwards**

These times will be reviewed as needed.

Drop off

8.30 – 8.45am	P4 and P5	Side gate C (Robinsonstown)
	P6 and P7	Main Entrance
8.45 – 9.00am	P1	Side gate C (Robinsonstown)
	P2 and P3	Main Entrance

ALL CHILDREN WILL LEAVE THROUGH THE ENTRANCE THEY USED IN THE MORNING

Pick up times

1.20pm	P1	
1.30pm	P2	
1.45pm	P3	Tuesday and Wednesday
2.20pm	P3	Monday, Thursday and Friday
2.35pm	P4 – P7	

After School Activities

Our afterschool activity programme will return in September in a format that meets with appropriate Covid mitigations. Further information to follow.

Medical Information

Please keep the school informed of any recently diagnosed allergies or other medical conditions.

Medical forms can be found on our school website.

If applicable, please complete these and email them to Mrs Greer jgreer521@c2kni.net

Allergies

We have children in school who have severe allergies. Therefore, it is extremely important that **NO NUTS or foods containing nuts** are to be brought to school by the children. Thank you.

Emergency Contact Numbers / Personal Details

Please ensure the school has at least three up to date contact numbers for your child should you need to be contacted during school hours and while your child is travelling home on the school bus.

Healthy Breaks – P3 – P7

Children are to bring healthy food with them to eat at break times. They are able to bring a wide selection of food to school including a pancake, sandwich, fruit, yoghurt, cheese and vegetables. Please ensure that all packaging can be easily opened by your child.

Water Bottles

Children can bring their own water bottles to school. Please make sure they are named and filled up each morning as the children will not have the opportunity to fill them during the day.

School Meals

School meals cost £2.60 per day - £13.00 per week. Please consult the dinner menu which will be on our school website and send the correct money on a **Monday** morning for the whole week. We are unable to lodge cheques or send home change and can only accept the correct money. Thank you.

Food Allergies – school meals

Forms are available from the school cook, Mrs M Neill, should your child develop or present with food allergies which require notification to our school canteen staff.

Free School Meals

ARE YOU ENTITLED TO FREE SCHOOL MEALS?

Parents/Guardians can apply if your son or daughter is in full-time education and if you are in receipt of one of the following benefits:-

Income Support; Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance; Income Related Employment and Support Allowance; Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit; Child Tax Credit or Working Tax Credit with an annual taxable income of £16,190 or less; Universal credit and have net household earnings not exceeding £14,000 per year.

<https://www.eani.org.uk/financial-help/free-school-meals-uniform-grants>

School Bus

Our school bus will run as normal from Tuesday 1 September. Although not mandatory for children under 13, the Department of Education strongly advise that ALL children wear face masks on school buses.

Dates for your Diary 2021 – 2022

Holidays

If you are arranging a holiday for your child, please arrange it within our school holidays.

School Holidays 2021/2022

Half Term

Wednesday 27 October - School closed to
Friday 29 October
School starts again on Monday 1 November

Christmas Holidays

Monday 20 December - School closed to
Monday 3 January
School starts again on Tuesday 4 January

Half Term

Wednesday 16 February - School closed to
Friday 18 February
School starts again on Monday 21 February

St. Patrick's Day

Thursday 17 March
Friday 18 March

Easter Holidays

Monday 11 April - School closed to
Friday 22 April
School starts again on Monday 25 April

Friday 29 April
Monday 2 May

Thursday 2 June Re-arranged May Day Bank Holiday
Friday 3 June Platinum Jubilee Bank Holiday