



**BIRCHES PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
**NEWS LETTER**  
**January / February / March 2022**

**Admission to Primary 1 for September 2022**

Application forms for Primary 1 should be completed online through the link on the Education Authority website [www.eani.org.uk](http://www.eani.org.uk).

The portal will be open from **noon on Monday 10th January 2022** and will close **at noon on Friday 28th January 2022**.

Your child's birth certificate and any other necessary documentation should be uploaded to the document hub. The application form will tell you how to do this.

**Swimming Programme**

The swimming programme for P6 children will begin on **Wednesday 5 January until Wednesday 9 February**. The swimming programme for P5 children will commence on **Wednesday 23 February until Wednesday 30 March**.

Swimming for P4 children will take place after our Easter break.

Children are to bring their swimming kit along with a contribution of £2.00 each week.

Children are not to bring any valuables with them to the pool.

**Love Your Heart Day – Monday 14 February – NON UNIFORM DAY**

On Monday 14 February Mrs Neill, our school cook, will be organising a special menu to focus on healthy foods which are important to maintain a healthy heart. This will be a non-uniform day - the children can wear something red.

There will be a voluntary donation of £1.00 to go to The British Heart Foundation.

**Fitness Freddy - Energy Fitness Day – Tuesday 15 February 2022– non-uniform Sports Wear Day**

All of the children in the school will take part in a sponsored fitness day. All proceeds go towards school funds.

**PDMU – Drug Awareness – first session Friday 25 February**

Jeannie Graham, from 'Portadown Temperance Council' will be working with children from P6 and P7 on areas linked to Drug Awareness over a five-week period.

**School Photographer – Monday 7 March**

The photographer will come to school on Monday 7 March to take individual and family group photographs. Further details will be sent home with the children.

**World War II Event - Monday 28 March**

Children from P4 have been learning about World War II in World Around Us during the first term. They will be given the opportunity to visit the Palace Stables, Armagh on Monday 28 March and they will explore 'Life during the War' focusing on the Blitz, Evacuees and Rationing.

**PTA - Friends of Birches**

Thank you for supporting the PTA Christmas Raffle which raised a total of £955.00, and congratulations to those of you who won prizes. We are delighted to report that our PTA were awarded charity status in December 2021. This means that going forward the PTA are now eligible to apply for a greater range of publicly advertised grants. Our focus this year is on seeking funding to develop outdoor learning spaces. Recently, a grant application has been submitted to 'The National Lottery Community Fund: Living Places and Spaces' so please keep your fingers crossed as we await the outcome of the (expected March 2022). The PTA hope to organise a second fundraising event in Spring.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY - SCHOOL CAR PARK ARRANGEMENTS**

I would like to bring your attention to a few concerns we have about collection times in the school car park.

### **Specific problems are arising from:**

- **Adults and children walking across the car park**
- **Cars stopping at the circle**
- **Lack of awareness and observation when reversing/parking**

I understand that the parking in and around school at certain times can be difficult. Therefore, it is important that everyone plays their part in keeping our car park as safe as possible for everyone, particularly our children.

### **To improve the situation, I would ask that:**

- **All adults and children use the designated and clearly marked out pedestrian areas**
- **Cars should park in a bay so they are able to walk along the pedestrian areas (NOT across the car park).**
- **NO STOPPING around the 'circle' area**
- **Everyone drives safely, slowing and carefully both in the car park and the roads around school.**

I appreciate that it is not always parents who do the school run so I would ask you to pass on the relevant information to whoever is dropping off/picking up your child/children.

Thank you for your support in this.

## **School Procedures regarding Covid-19**

As the Covid-19 virus is still present within our community, it is important that we maintain the measures we have been putting in place:

### **Covid-19 Prevention**

- It is essential that all children are reminded of the importance of personal hygiene, particularly around the importance of regular handwashing.
- Children will be asked by staff to wash their hands regularly throughout the school day.
- 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.

### **Covid-19 Revised Guidance:**

'The NI Executive has announced a change to the rules on self-isolation for positive cases, reducing the period from 10 days to 7 days, providing the individual has negative LFD results on both days 6 and 7 with tests taken 24 hours apart.'

If your child is self-isolating and you are unsure when they can return to school, please do not hesitate to contact us - 028 38851443

## General Information

### Dinner money

School meals cost £2.60 per day - £13.00 per week. Please consult the monthly menu and send the correct money on a **Monday** morning for the whole week.

We are unable to lodge cheques and can only accept cash. Thank you.

### Nut Allergy - Reminder

As we have a child in school with a nut allergy, it is extremely important that **NO NUTS or foods containing nuts** are to be brought to school by the children. Thank you.

### Contact Details

Please ensure that school has an up to date phone number on which to contact you. If you have moved house recently make sure that you have notified school of your child's new address.

If you have not been receiving text messages from school, please contact Mrs Watson.

### School Uniform

Please ensure children's names are on all coats, sweatshirts and on clothes that are removed to change for P.E and swimming. If possible, use name tabs as names written in ink can wear off during the year.

The only piece of jewellery to be worn in school is a watch.

For health and safety reasons **earrings, rings and necklaces are not to be worn.**

### Contacting School

If you are concerned or unsure of anything relating to your child please do not worry at home, pick up the phone and speak to either Mrs Watson or your child's teacher. We will be only too willing to talk to you after school at a mutually convenient time.

### Money Wallets

Money wallets are still available to buy from school. These come in packs of 40 at a cost of £3.00.

These can be purchased from your child's class teacher.

### Severe Weather Emergency Closure

We are coming back to that time of year again when heavy frost or snow could affect the running of our school.

A letter regarding our school procedures in severe weather is on our school website under letters.

**If you have not been receiving a text message from the school this term, please contact the office to have your number added to the system 028 38851443.**

### Medical Information

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



## Dates for your Diary 2021/2022

<b>Monday 10th January - Friday 28th January 2022</b>	Admission to Primary 1 for September 2022
<b>Wednesday 5 January until Wednesday 9 February</b>	Swimming programme for P6 children
<b>Wednesday 23 February until Wednesday 30 March</b>	Swimming programme for P5 children
<b>Monday 14 February</b>	Non-uniform - Love Your Heart Day (Wear red)
<b>Tuesday 15 February 2022</b>	Non-uniform - Fitness Day (Sports Wear)
<b>Monday 7 March</b>	School Photographer
<b>Monday 28 March</b>	P4 trip to Armagh Palace Stables

## School Holidays 2021/2022

### Half Term

<b>Wednesday 16 February to Friday 18 February</b>	Half Term – school closed
<b>Monday 21 February</b>	School will reopen

### St Patrick's Day

<b>Thursday 17 and Friday 18 March</b>	School closed
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### Easter Holidays

<b>Friday 8 April</b>	School will close from 12pm <i>Further information regarding school closing times will follow.</i>
<b>Monday 11 April to Friday 22 April</b>	School will be closed for Easter Holidays
<b>Monday 25 April</b>	School will reopen

### School Holidays Next Term

#### **Change of date**

<b>Monday 2 and Tuesday 3 May</b> ( <i>instead of Friday 29 April</i> )	Bank Holiday – school closed
<b>Thursday 2 and Friday 3 June</b>	Bank Holiday and her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

## 2022/2023 School Year

### **School Starts back on Tuesday 30 August, 2022**

<b>*Tuesday 30 August</b>	School will close at 12.00pm
<b>*Wednesday 31 August</b>	School will close at 12.00pm
<b>Thursday 1 September</b>	Normal School Hours

\*There will be no lunch served on these days.

The bus will be available to bring children home who normally travel on the bus.