



BIRCHES PRIMARY SCHOOL

Newsletter

November / December 2022

Early Closing

Monday 7 and Tuesday 8 November

Finishing times

1.00pm	P4 - P7 Children with no siblings at school
1.00pm	P1 - P7 Children who normally get the school bus
1.10pm	P3 and siblings
1.20pm	P1 and siblings (normal finishing time for P1)
1.30pm	P2 and siblings (normal finishing time for P2)

Monday 7, Tuesday 8 and Wednesday 9 November - Parent Teacher Consultations

Interviews for parents/carers of children from P2 to P7 will take place from **Monday 7 November**.

Information has been put on Seesaw about how to book an appointment.

Monday 7 November	– P2 to P7	In-Person Interviews from 1.45pm
Tuesday 8 November	– P2 to P7	Video Call Interviews from 1.45pm
Wednesday 9 November	– P4 and P5	In-Person Interviews from 1.45pm

Friday 18th November - Anti-Bullying Week 2022 - Monday 14th

Anti-Bullying Week 2022 will take place from Monday 14 November to Friday 18 November 2022.

The theme is **Reach Out** and the week will start with 'Odd Socks Day' on Monday 14 November.

Odd Socks Day is an opportunity to encourage children to express themselves and celebrate their individuality and what makes us all unique. They can wear their own clothes to school along with their odd socks! There is no charge.

Our pupils will be taking part in a range of activities throughout the week. The concepts and themes that will be explored will be used throughout the school year in conjunction with our Pastoral Care policies and ethos in Birches Primary School.

Monday 21 – Thursday 24 November - Hope for Youth Ministries

Children from P4 to P7 will be able to take part in a range of activities with members from the Hope for Youth ministries each afternoon during this week.

Wednesday 30 November - Family Portrait Evening

A booking form for the family Portrait night has been sent home with your child. If you would like further details regarding this, please contact Mrs Watson – pwatson676@c2kni.net

Forms are to be returned by **Wednesday 23 November**.

Thursday 1 December - Ditch The Dark Day

The Eco Team have organised a Ditch the Dark Day at school. Children can come to school wearing bright clothing. There will be an assembly with Dave Wiggins from Sustrans to talk to the children about the importance of wearing reflective clothing when they are out in the dark. Further information will be sent out from the ECO Team.

P1 – P3 Friday 2 December

P4 – P7 Tuesday 6 December

Christmas Party Lunch

Christmas party lunch for P1 to P3 will take place on Friday 2 December and on Tuesday 6 December for P4 to P7. If your child wishes to take this, it is very important that they let their teacher know on the Monday before their Christmas lunch, for catering purposes.

P4 – P7 Friday 2 December

P1 – P3 Tuesday 6 December

Bardic Theatre

This year we are offering children the opportunity to travel to the Bardic Theatre Donaghmore, to watch Aladdin. The cost of this trip is £10.00 per child and the school will cover the cost of transport.

Money is to be sent to school by Monday 28 November.

Monday 5 December - P7 Renewable Energy Day

On Monday 5 December the children from P7 will be taking part in a 'Renewable Energy Day' in school taken by members of SENTINUS.

Friday 9 December - Save the Children Christmas Jumper Day

Children can wear a special 'Christmas Jumper', a Santa hat or come to school in their own clothes to help raise money for Save the Children. If children wish to take part, they can bring £2.00 in a sealed envelope.

Tuesday 13 December 10.00am

P1 and P2 Christmas Performance

'Baarmy Bethlehem'

Wednesday 14 December 10.00am

P3 and P4 Christmas Performance

'The Big Little Nativity'

This year children from P1 and P2 will be performing 'Baarmy Bethlehem' together and children from P3 and P4 are performing 'The Big Little Nativity'.

Due to seating arrangements, we are having to ask that only 2 people per family come to watch their child perform. Please let your child's teacher know via Seesaw if you are able to attend.

Monday 19 and Tuesday 20 December - Non-Uniform Days

Non-uniform days on Monday 19 and Tuesday 20 December - **£2.00 per child for both days including food for the Christmas party.**

Christmas parties will take place on Monday or Tuesday.

Early Closing

Monday 19 December - School will close early.

1.00pm	P4 - P7 Children with no siblings at school
1.00pm	P1 - P7 Children who normally get the school bus
1.10pm	P3 and siblings
1.20pm	P1 and siblings (normal finishing time for P1)
1.30pm	P2 and siblings (normal finishing time for P2)

Tuesday 20 December - School will close early. There will be no dinner on this day

12.00pm	P4 - P7 Children with no siblings at school
12.00pm	P1 - P7 Children who normally get the school bus
12.10pm	P3 and siblings
12.20pm	P1 and siblings (normal finishing time for P1)
12.30pm	P2 and siblings (normal finishing time for P2)

Please arrive promptly to collect your child to aid congestion in the car park. Thank you

PTA

The PTA organised a Peter Pans Takeover on Wednesday 26th October which was a wonderful night and enjoyed by all the children.

We intend to hold a Christmas Raffle again this year. If you are in the position to donate a raffle prize please let Mrs Watson know – pwatson676@c2kni.net or 028 38851443.

All money raised through our fundraising goes directly to school to support the purchasing of equipment and programmes for our children. Since September, the PTA has financially supported school's subscription to the Play Resource Centre and the purchasing of costumes needed for P1-P2 Christmas performances.

The PTA were successful in securing a £900 ABC council grant which was used to fund the Jubilee celebration day at school in June. We were also successful in securing an £8000 'Live Here Love Here' grant which is being used to develop an outdoor learning area. Work started over the half term break, and we hope to have this area completed and ready for use by beginning of March.

If you are a regular Amazon shopper, please consider using AmazonSmile and supporting 'Birches Primary School PTA'. AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support school every time you shop, at no cost to you.

We would really appreciate your support!

Thank you

General Information

Health and Safety – Car Park

I realise that parking in and around school can be difficult at pick up times. There are designated parking spaces in the parent/visitors car park and additional parking in the lay-by.

Our priority in school is the safety of the children. It has been brought to my attention that there have been some concerns about cars driving into areas which are designated areas for children to walk safely.

I would like you to make sure that whoever is collecting your child from school is made aware that they are not to park in the staff car park, or cross over the pedestrian crossing at the front of 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.

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>

Money Wallets

Money wallets are available to buy from school. These come in packs of 40 and cost £3.00 per pack. These can be purchased from your child's class teacher. The correct money can be sent to school in a clearly marked envelope.

Communication

Seesaw and Text Messages are our main communication tools between staff and parents. Information can also be found on our website www.birchesps.com

Illness

There are occasions when your child may suffer from childhood illnesses eg: chickenpox, vomiting or diarrhoea. As has always been the case, a child who is unwell should not be attending school.

Absent Notes

If your child is absent, please email a note to our school secretary Mrs Neill on the day they return to school stating the reason for their absence ineill722@c2kni.net.

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.

Medical Information

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

Allergies - Reminder

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.

Contact Details

Please ensure that school has an up to date phone number on which to contact you on. If you have moved house recently, please 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 and sweatshirts. Please 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.

Dates for your Diary

- **Monday 7 and Tuesday 8 November** Early Closing
- **Monday 7, Tuesday 8 and Wednesday 9 November** Parent Teacher Consultations
- **Monday 14 November** 'Odd Sock Day' – Anti-bullying week
Children can wear their own clothes and odd socks on Monday 14 November (No charge)
- **Monday 21 – Thursday 24 November** P4 – P7 Hope for Youth Ministries
- **Wednesday 30 November** Family Portrait Evening
- **Thursday 1 December** Ditch the Dark Day
- **Friday 2 December** P1 – P3 Christmas Party Lunch
- **Friday 2 December** P4 – P7 Bardic Theatre
- **Tuesday 6 December** P1 – P3 Bardic Theatre
- **Tuesday 6 December** P4 – P7 Christmas Party Lunch
- **Friday 9 December** Save the Children – Christmas Jumper Day
Children can wear their own clothes and a Christmas jumper £2.00 per child to go to Save the Children
- **Tuesday 13 December 10.00am** P1 and P2 Christmas Performance
- **Wednesday 14 December 10.00am** P3 and P4 Christmas Performance
- **Monday 19/Tuesday 20 December** Christmas Parties - Non-Uniform Day £2.00
- **Monday 19/Tuesday 20 December** Early Closing

School Holidays 2022 / 2023

Christmas Holidays

Wednesday 21 December - School closed to

Tuesday 3 January

School starts again on Wednesday 4 January

Half Term

Thursday 16 February - School closed to

Wednesday 22 February

School starts again on Thursday 23 February

St. Patrick's Day

Friday 17 March - School closed

Easter Holidays

Thursday 6 April - School closed to

Wednesday 19 April

School starts again on Thursday 20 April

Monday 1 May - School closed

Monday 29 and Tuesday 30 May - School closed

School starts again on Wednesday 31 May

***I would like to wish everyone a safe and
Happy Christmas and New Year***