



## BIRCHES PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Newsletter

November / December 2023

#### Tuesday 17 October – School Calendar Photographs

Our school photographer from Dandelion photography will be coming to school on Tuesday 17 October. Photographs of the children will be taken in their birthday month for a School Calendar.

#### Half-term break

School will be closed from Monday 30 October to Friday 3 November.

#### Monday 6 – Thursday 9 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.

#### PTA – Peter Pans Takeover – Friday 10 November

Date for your diary! The PTA have organised a Peter Pans Takeover on Friday 10 November from 6.30pm to 8pm. Further information will be sent home with your child(ren).

#### Monday 13 November - Anti-Bullying Week 2023 – Odd Socks Day! Non-Uniform Day!

Anti-Bullying Week 2023 will take place from Monday 13 November to Friday 17 November 2023.

The theme is *Make a Noise About Bullying*, and the week will start with **'Odd Socks Day 'on Monday 13 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.

#### Parent Teacher Interviews - EARLY CLOSING

##### Monday 13, Tuesday 14 and Wednesday 15 November

Interviews for parents/carers of children from P1 to P7 will take place from **Monday 13 November.**

Information will be put on Seesaw about how to book an appointment through School Cloud.

There will be in-person interviews held on the Monday and Tuesday and video interviews on Wednesday 15 November.

#### School will close early.

##### **Finishing times - Monday 13, Tuesday 14 and Wednesday 15 November**

<b>12.45pm</b>	P4 - P7 Children with no siblings at school
<b>1.00pm</b>	All other children from P1 to P7
<b>1.10pm</b>	School Bus - P1 - P7 Children who normally get the school bus (please make sure your child knows if they are to get the bus home)

#### Cash for Clobber – Monday 6 and Tuesday 7 November

We are having another Cash for Clobber collection. Clothes can be left in the entrance foyer on Monday 6 and Tuesday 7 November.

Please do not send in items after these dates. Thank you

### **STEM Foundation Stage Workshops – Tuesday 21 November**

Sentinus is a not-for-profit educational charity which works with schools in Northern Ireland to deliver programmes which promote engagement in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). Children from P1 and P2 will carry out a range of activities linked to the topics of My Body, P1 and Three Little Builders, P2.

### **PTA Christmas Raffle**

We had a very successful Christmas Raffle last year and I would like to thank everyone who donated a prize. We intend to hold a Christmas Raffle again this year which will be drawn on Thursday 14th December. If you are in the position to donate a prize please contact Jenny Davison (Chairperson of the PTA) via 07708956415, or Mrs Watson via pwatson676@c2kni.net or 028 38851443.

### **Ditch The Dark Day – date to be arranged**

The Eco Team will be organising 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.

### **Tuesday 5 December Bardic Theatre P1 – P7 – No school dinner today**

This year our school is taking over the Bardic Theatre! All the children in school will have the opportunity to travel to the Bardic Theatre Donaghmore together to watch Cinderella. The cost of this trip is £12.00 per child and the school will cover the cost of transport.

Money can be paid through School Money.

Children can bring a packed lunch which they can eat on their return to school.

### **Wednesday 6 December – Whole School Christmas Dinner**

Christmas dinner for P1 to P7 will take place on Wednesday 6 December.

If your child wishes to take this, it is very important book it on the Monday before their Christmas lunch, for catering purposes.

### **Friday 8 December - Save the Children Christmas Jumper Day - £2.00 per child**

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. It is £2.00 per child, which can be paid through School Money.

### **The Wizard of Oz – P5, P6 and P7 Pantomime**

Children from P5, P6 and P7 will be performing in our pantomime 'The Wizard of Oz' on Wednesday 13 December at 10am and Thursday 14 December at 7pm.

Entrance is by ticket only and they will be on sale from Monday 4 December. Further information will follow.

### **Wednesday 20 and Thursday 21 December - Non-Uniform Days**

Non-uniform days on Wednesday 20 and Thursday 21 December

Christmas parties will take place on Wednesday or Thursday. More details will be put on Seesaw.

### **Early Closing**

#### **Wednesday 20 December - School will close early.**

- 12.45pm** P4 - P7 Children with no siblings at school
- 1.00pm** All other children from P1 to P7
- 1.10pm** School Bus - P1 - P7 Children who normally get the school bus  
(please make sure your child knows if they are to get the bus home)

#### **Thursday 21 December - School will close early. There will be no dinner on this day.**

School will close early.

- 12.00pm** P4 - P7 Children with no siblings at school
- 12.10pm** All other children from P1 to P7
- 12.10pm** School Bus - P1 - P7 Children who normally get the school bus  
(please make sure your child knows if they are to get the bus home)

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

**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](http://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](mailto: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.

**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.

**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

- **Tuesday 17 October** School Calendar Photographs
- **Monday 30 – Friday 3 November** School Closed – Half Term
- **Monday 6 – Thursday 9 November** P4 – P7 Hope for Youth Ministries
- **Friday 10 November** PTA Peter Pans Takeover
- **Monday 13, Tuesday 14 and Wed 15 November** Early Closing
- **Monday 13, Tuesday 14 and Wed 15 November** Parent Teacher Consultations
- **Monday 13 November** ‘Odd Sock Day’ – Anti-bullying week  
Children can wear their own clothes and odd socks on Monday 13 November (No charge)
- **Tuesday 5 December** P1 – P7 Bardic Theatre
- **Wednesday 6 December** P1 – P7 Christmas Dinner
- **Friday 8 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
- **Wednesday 13 December 10.00am** P5, P6 and P7 Christmas Performance
- **Thursday 14 December 7.00pm** P5, P6 and P7 Christmas Performance
- **Wednesday 20/Thursday 21 December** Christmas Parties - Non-Uniform Day £2.00
- **Wednesday 20/Thursday 21 December** Early Closing

## School Holidays 2023 / 2024

### Christmas Holidays

Friday 22 December - School closed to  
Friday 5 January  
*School starts again on Monday 8 January*

### Half Term

Wednesday 14 February - School closed to  
Friday 16 February  
*School starts again on Monday 19 February*

### St. Patrick's Day

Monday 18 March - School closed

### Easter Holidays

Thursday 28 March - School closed to  
Wednesday 10 April  
*School starts again on Thursday 11 April*

Monday 6 May - School closed

Monday 27 and Tuesday 28 May - School closed  
*School starts again on Wednesday 29 May*

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

