



**BIRCHES PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
**NEWS LETTER**  
**January / February / March 2024**

**Admission to Primary 1 for September 2024**

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 Tuesday 9th January 2024** and will close **at noon on Friday 26th January 2024**.

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.

**Key Dates for Applying for a P1 place for September 2024**

Date	Activity
Tuesday 12 December 2023	Admissions criteria for Primary schools published on the EA website.
Tuesday 9 January 2024 – at 12 noon	EA Connect opens for online applications for Primary 1.
Friday 26 January 2024 – at 12 noon	EA Connect closes for online applications for Primary 1.
Wednesday 31 January 2024 – by 4pm	Deadline for submitting verification/supporting documents via EA Connect. Final date for late paper applications.
Thursday 25 April 2024	Parents/carers will receive application outcomes via email (where one is held) or by letter.

**PDMU – Drug Awareness – first session Monday 8 January**

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

**P7 Sporting Pathways Programme – starting on Tuesday 9 January.**

Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council has recently been successful in receiving funding from Sport Northern Ireland under the District Council Community Planning 23/24 Investment Programme. One element of this funding is to deliver a Sporting Pathways Programme in 24 Primary Schools, which is an 8-week sports specific coaching programme for girls and boys in Primary 7. We will be working in partnership with Ulster Hockey to deliver these sessions. The programme will commence week of 8 January and run for 8 weeks.

**Swimming Programme**

The swimming programme for P5 children will begin on **Wednesday 10 January until Wednesday 21 February**.

The swimming programme for P4 children will commence on **Wednesday 28 February until Wednesday 27 March**.

Payment can be made through School Money.

Children are to bring their swimming kit each week and they are not to bring any valuables with them to the pool.

### **World War II Event - Monday 15 January**

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 15 January and they will explore 'Life during the War' focusing on the Blitz, Evacuees and Rationing.

### **Dairy Council – Tuesday 30 January**

The dairy council will be coming out to carry out a workshop with children from P5/P6.

### **Playtime Buddies – Bun sale - Thursday 25 and Friday 26 January**

Children from the Playtime Buddies team are raising money to buy new equipment for outdoor play at break and lunchtimes. They will be holding a bun sale on Thursday 25 and Friday 26 January. Buns and cookies will be 50p each.

### **School Disco – Friday 9 February**

A disco for all children currently attending Birches Primary School will be held on Friday 9 February. Further details will follow.

### **Love Your Heart Day – Tuesday 13 February – NON-UNIFORM DAY - £1.00 towards the British Heart Foundation**

On Tuesday 13 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.**

### **Half Term Wednesday 14 February – Friday 16 February**

School reopens on Monday 19 February

### **School Closed – St. Patrick's Day – Monday 18 March**

### **Omniplex Takeover – Thursday 28 March**

The PTA have organised a 'takeover' of the Omniplex in Craigavon on Thursday 28 March. Further details about this will follow.

### **School Closed – Easter Break – Thursday 28 March – Wednesday 10 April**

School reopens on Thursday 11 April

### **PTA - Friends of Birches**

Thank you for supporting our Peter Pans fundraiser which raised a total of £760. This money has been used to buy new reading books throughout the school.

#### **Fundraising events for this term:**

- Friday 9 February School Disco
- Thursday 28 March Craigavon Omniplex Takeover

**Your support is very much appreciated.**

### **Early Closing**

**Wednesday 27 March - 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 (please make sure your child knows if they are to get the bus home)

12.10pm All other children from P1 to P7

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

## General Information

### 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 – [pwatson676@c2kni.net](mailto:pwatson676@c2kni.net) / 028 38851443.

### 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.

**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 **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.

### 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

<b>Tuesday 9th January - Friday 26th January 2023</b>	Admission to Primary 1 for September 2024
<b>Monday 15 January</b>	P4 trip to Armagh Palace Stables
<b>Thursday 25 and Friday 26 January</b>	Playtime Team Bun Sale – 50p per bun/cookie
<b>Wednesday 10 January until Wednesday 21 February</b>	Swimming programme for P5 children
<b>Friday 9 February</b>	School disco (further details to follow)
<b>Tuesday 13 February</b>	Non-uniform - Love Your Heart Day (Wear something red)
<b>Wednesday 28 February until Wednesday 27 March</b>	Swimming programme for P4 children
<b>Wednesday 27 March</b>	School closes early
<b>Thursday 28 March</b>	Omniplex Takeover (further details to follow)

## School Holidays

### Half Term

Wednesday 14 February	-	School closed to
Friday 16 February		
<i>School starts again on Monday 19 February</i>		

### St. Patrick's Day

Monday 18 March	-	School closed
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### Easter Holidays

Thursday 28 March	-	School closed to
Wednesday 10 April		
<i>School starts again on Thursday 11 April</i>		

Monday 6 May	Bank Holiday	-	School closed
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Monday 27 and Tuesday 28 May		-	School closed
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*School starts again on Wednesday 29 May*

## 2024/2025 School Year

### School Starts back on Thursday 29 August, 2023

<b>*Thursday 29 August</b>	School will close at 12.00pm
<b>*Friday 30 August</b>	School will close at 12.00pm
<b>Monday 2 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.