



School Information

School Year
2025-2026

Updated January 2026

We care ~ We share ~ We learn

September 2025

Dear parent or carer,

We hope that the information contained in this is useful.

Curriculum and other updates are provided by teachers throughout the year, including via Seesaw.

Our website www.newrowstpatricksp.com is a very useful source of school policies, procedures and information, including important safeguarding policies. If you can't find the information or policy you are looking for, please contact the office and we will be very glad to help.

Please do not hesitate in contacting me should you require any further information about your child's time at New Row St. Patrick's.

With every best wish,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mrs D Graffin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'D'.

Mrs Deirdre Graffin

(Principal)

Contents

- The School Team
- The School Day
- Communication between home & school
- Attendance
- Collection arrangements
- After school Club
- Child Protection
- School Uniform
- PE arrangements
- Making payments to school
- Break & Lunch Arrangements
- School Supplies
- Health and Medication
- General reminders
- Other useful information
- Board of Governors
- Friends of New Row
- School opening and holidays 2025-26

The School Team as of Sept 2025 (including temporary staff)

Teacher	Key Responsibilities
Mrs Deirdre Graffin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal • Curriculum & Assessment, Safeguarding Team
Mrs Claire Shivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vice Principal, SENCo & Y2 teacher • Wellbeing Champion & Designated teacher for Child Protection
Mrs Michelle Diamond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 teacher • ICT Coordinator, Wellbeing Champion & Safeguarding Team
Mrs Emer Scullion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 teacher • Safeguarding Team
Mrs Colette Burns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 2 teacher • Literacy & SEN support
Mrs Nuala Stuart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 3 teacher • World Around Us & Assistant Literacy Coordinator
Mrs Catherine Hudson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 4 teacher • Literacy Coordinator
Miss Niamh Wilson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 4 teacher • Assistant Music Coordinator
Mrs Oonagh Kelly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 5 teacher • Numeracy Coordinator & Safeguarding Team
Mr Conor Hasson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 6 teacher • Shared Education, PE & Assistant Numeracy Coordinator
Mr Anton McGrath	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 7 teacher • Assistant ICT & PE Coordinator
Classroom Assistants (including temporary & placement staff)	
Mrs Jovita Bernotiene Mrs Claire Bradley Miss Emma Brown Mrs Pauline Cleary-Vong Mrs Roisin Cuskeran Mrs Demelza Dinsmore Mrs Joanne Doey Miss Caitlin Fullerton	Mrs Jeanette Irvine Mrs Ann Kerr Mrs Nicola Long Mr Owen McAuley Miss Emily McCoy Mrs Maura McGuckin Mrs Jane McIvor Mrs Sarah McMullan Miss Sian Milne
Lunchtime Supervisors	Mrs Roisin McElhinney Mrs Joanne Doey
Canteen Staff	Miss Marie McKenna (Kitchen Supervisor) Mrs Shauna Kearns Mrs Caroline Diamond
Building Supervisor	Mr Kevin Mullan Mr Stephen Cullen
Cleaner	Miss Emma Brown/Mrs Maura McGuckin
Senior Clerical Officer	Mrs Sharon Keenan & Mr Seamus McNicholl

This list will be updated if/when staffing arrangements change throughout the year

Board of Governors: Reconstituted Term 1 2024

Mrs Mary White (Chair)	Mr Terence Close	Mr Maurice Diamond
Very Rev John Gates	Mrs Clare Heaney (Vice Chair)	Mrs Marian Loughlin
Mr Dean Mooney	Mrs Catherine Shields	Mrs Claire Shivers
Mrs Deirdre Graffin (Principal & Secretary)		

Friends of New Row St Patrick's PS

Chair	Secretary	Treasurer
Grainne Diamond	Claire Coleman	Pat Hanson

The School Day

Breakfast Club from 8.15am-8.50am
Children arrive from 8.50am
Day begins with morning prayers at 9.00 am
Morning lessons begin at 9.05
BREAK: 10.30-10.45am
Midmorning lessons 10.45-12 Foundation Stage (Y1&2) 10.45 -12.30 KS1 and KS2 (Y3-7)
LUNCH 12-12.45: Foundation Stage (Y1&2) 12.15-1.00: KS1 (Y3 & 4) 12.30 – 1.10: KS2 (Y3-7)
HOMETIME 2pm for P1, P2 and P3; 3pm for P4 – P7 3pm for Year 3 after Christmas Please note: Friday finish times Y1-3: 1.50pm, Y4-7: 2pm
Afterschools club from 2-3pm / Homework club from 3- 4pm

Breakfast club from 8.15-8.50 (£1.50 daily including cereal, toast and drink)

All children are welcome when the bell rings at 8.50am. No child should be in school before the bell goes at 8.50am unless they are attending the breakfast club. Only those at breakfast club are supervised in the hall. No child should be left unsupervised outside school before 8.50am.

School begins promptly at 9.00am. Should your child be absent for any reason, please contact the office.

Making a good start to the day

In the interests of promoting self-management skills, we ask that parents of all pupils do not accompany their child to the classroom door. Children can be left off at the front door or the back gate. The children are growing in independence and confidence and are more than capable of organising themselves at the start the school day. Should a parent/carer wish to pass on any information to school staff, they can do this via the school office. Appointments with class teachers can of course be arranged for anything that may take longer to discuss.

Communication between home & school

We aim to keep up to date with everything that is happening in New Row St. Patrick's. If you are contacting the school about any queries or issues, please remember that the first point of contact is by calling 02879468426 or e-mailing info@newrowstpatrickspcs.castledawson.ni.sch.uk.

Regular forms of communication between home and school include:

- Weekly Sway (uploaded to website, shared by text and on Seesaw)
- Class Seesaw App
- Facebook page New Row St. Patrick's PS
- X feed (@NewRowPS)
- Website newrowstpatrickspcs.com
- Other letters etc. as appropriate and when required

Please ensure the school is informed of any change to your contact information immediately.

The school office opens at 8.30am each morning. There is also a facility to leave a message on our phone system. School office closes at 4pm daily and 3pm on Friday.

Speaking with Your Child's Teacher

Should you wish to speak with a teacher, contact the school office to request a callback.

Seesaw is an important way to share information with you. However, we will continue to use it one-way, meaning teachers are unable to receive (and therefore respond to) any comments from parents via Seesaw.

We trust that parents and carers appreciate DENI guidance that school staff are not expected or required to respond to communication from parents or others outside of the school's normal operating hours, except in the case of a critical incident.

Concerns arise in every school from time to time and we aim to ensure they are addressed in a professional way. Please do not hesitate to contact the school if you have any concerns, big or small. The procedure for dealing with concerns, complaints etc. is as follows:

- If appropriate contact your child's teacher at a time that is suitable to their teaching day. The school office can pass on a message to arrange a callback.
- Arrange an appointment through the office.
- Contact the school office to make an appointment with the Principal.

We aim to resolve issues that arise as quickly as we can but ask parents to appreciate that it isn't always possible to speak to the principal/teacher without notice due to classroom commitments. A copy of the school's complaints policy and procedure is available at newrowstpatrickspcs.com along with a range of other school policies, as appropriate and relevant.

Parent/Teacher Meetings

Term 1: (October)	Term 2: (Feb/March)	Term 3: (June)
Overview of year & how best to support your child	Progress update	Written report

Other meetings and events will be organised throughout the year if/when appropriate.

Supporting children with additional needs: working in partnership with parents

Sometimes teachers/parents can have concerns about a pupil's development. Teachers are trained to identify when a child has challenges and what actions/support can be put in place to help overcome these challenges. The class teacher may wish to arrange to speak to a parent about challenges identified at times other than the parent/teacher meetings. Similarly, a parent may wish to discuss challenges and should in the first instance approach the class teacher to arrange a suitable time. Mrs Shivers is SENCo (Special Needs Coordinator) and her role includes overseeing this process and any further actions/steps as necessary, including liaising with outside agencies such as the school's assigned Educational Psychologist. This is in keeping with our Special Needs Policy, a copy of which is available from the office on request.

Copies of all school policies are available on request from the office, with those relating to Safeguarding & Child Protection available at www.newrowstpatricksp.com

Attendance

Absences from school: illness

If your child is unable to attend school due to illness, please make sure you let the teacher know on the morning of the first day. You can do this by notifying the office. We must be able to account for all absences. Teachers will not send home extra work if your child is sick. Let them rest properly and make a full recovery. They can do some extra reading which teachers agree would be of greater benefit.

Absences from school: other reasons

Holidays/trips during school time interrupt children's learning and cannot be condoned by the school. Any unavoidable absence should be explained by sending in a short note for our records. We must record all such absences as 'unauthorised'. Unauthorised absences are monitored by the school in conjunction with Education Welfare. No work will be prepared by teachers for these absences.

Appointments & children going home due to illness

Appointments should be made for outside of school time, but we understand that this is not always possible. In the interests of Health & Safety and Child Protection, anyone collecting/returning a child should sign them in/out in the office. An 'out/in' book is in use.

Arriving late to school

Children should arrive from 8.50am onwards (unless at breakfast club). There is no supervision before 8.50am. Class begins with prayers at 9am and the security buzzer at the front door turned on. Any child arriving from 9.10am will be marked as late in the register. Education Welfare requires us to monitor lateness and parents will be asked for a reason which will be recorded. It is understandable that it is difficult for a child to enter a class where everyone has already settled into learning.

Home time Collection

For health and safety reasons we would appeal to all parents to collect their children promptly at the appropriate time each day. Children should be collected promptly and supervised by parents at all times once handover has taken place. This is particularly important when pedestrians are passing through the church car park. The safety of our pupils is paramount.

Teachers will escort children to their nearest exit:

Y1	Y2, 3 & 4	Y5	Y6 & 7
Front door	Back gate	Back gate	Front door

Y6 and 7: Parental consent can be given for children to walk down the church pathway and across church car park (unsupervised), crossed over by a New Row St. Patrick's staff member or leaving (unsupervised) via Chichester Ave gate. A link to the consent form is shared at the start of the academic year.

After school Club

We run an afterschool club from 2-3pm and a homework club from 3-4pm every day. (£2.50 per hour –booking required). These must be booked in advance and no later than midnight the previous day. This facility is very popular. If there are no spaces, contact the office to be added to the waiting list.

Child Protection

Chair of Safeguarding Team and Principal	Mrs Deirdre Graffin
Designated Teacher for Child Protection	Mrs Claire Shivers (VP)
Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection	Mrs Michelle Diamond, Mrs Oonagh Kelly & Mrs Emer Scullion
Chair of Board of Governors	Mrs Mary White
Governor Representative for Child Protection	Mr Maurice Diamond

Our safeguarding team undertakes regular reviews of practice to ensure our children's safety remains paramount. Regular updates include an annual 'Child Protection Week', with staff training and classroom activities to remind pupils and staff alike of important child protection messages. We also have a strong emphasis on eSafety, with planned lessons delivered throughout the year in Y1-7. If you need to speak to anyone in our Safeguarding Team, please do not hesitate in making an appointment. All issues are dealt with professionally and with the appropriate level of confidentiality.

Remember also that a select number of Safeguarding & Child Protection policies are available online and hard copies of all relevant policies available from the office on request.

Mobile Phones/Smart devices & watches in school

Children are not allowed to bring mobile phones to school, including on trips. All communication with children regarding messages about collection etc. should be made through the school office. In accordance with safeguarding procedures, children are also not permitted to wear smart watches that can send/receive messages or record images or audio.

School Uniform

There is an expectation that all children will wear their full uniform at all times in school, apart from a few designated non-uniform days. Parents will be notified in advance of any such days. All uniforms will be checked for names during the first week of each term. Please make sure all items are labelled. This really helps avoid problems, especially in identifying jumpers.

Sportique 7 Rainey St Magherafelt Some uniform items also available to order online at: www.sportique-ni.com	Select Kids Schoolwear 12 Rainey Street Magherafelt (Meadowlane Centre Car park)
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Girls	Boys
Light blue crested polo shirt Navy crested jumper or cardigan Navy skirt or pinafore or plain navy track bottoms Plain navy tights or white/navy knee socks Plain black/dark footwear <i>Girls do not wear leggings</i>	Light blue crested polo shirt Navy crested jumper Plain navy blue track bottoms/trousers Navy/grey/black socks Plain black/ dark footwear

PE uniform.

Y1-3 should wear trainers on PE days. They do not need a PE uniform but can wear school shorts on these days if desired.

Y4-7: PE uniform should be worn to school on PE days. When the PE timetable has been finalised, all parents will be notified to ensure they are aware of day(s) their child will wear their PE kit.

PE uniform comprises school PE t-shirt and school PE shorts (or plain navy school bottoms - *not branded* - on colder days). Track bottoms similar to shorts can be bought in both Sportique and Select Kids.

Summer Uniform (Optional)

PE shorts with school crest or plain navy knee-length shorts (not branded) with school polo shirt. Girls may also wear checked blue dresses (widely available)

Swimming in Key Stage 2:

All children Y5-7 receive swimming lessons in Greenvale Leisure Centre for one term per year. The current weekly cost is £4 (including transport), with £1 each week for lockers (refundable).

Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
Year 6	Year 7	Year 5

All children are required to bring swimwear (no bikinis or longer shorts), goggles and a towel in a suitable bag.

Break & Lunch Arrangements

New Row St Patrick's PS is a NUT FREE school.

We operate a healthy eating policy at break and lunch time.

Canteen break

A daily snack is available in school. It is payable at the start of each month (£5.50 per month). Toast is very popular in the Y1&2 classrooms with all children eating it daily & very few exceptions (if any). All canteen breaks are delivered to the classroom, with no time wasted queuing during playtime. Our new monthly canteen break arrangement is very popular as it is easy to organise and the children do not lose or forget money. Remember that break is like your milk order. The kitchen is unable to refund if your child is absent from school as the food is pre-ordered. If you wish your child

to stop taking break, the kitchen must be informed by the parent before the end of the month. Any alternatives should be in keeping with healthy eating policies.

Milk: Paid termly or monthly: £4, Term: £16. Milk is ordered monthly. If your child is off school, we cannot refund milk money or only charge you for the days they were present.

Lunch time

Your child can either bring a healthy packed lunch or purchase a dinner from the school's canteen. School dinners are available for £3.10 per day (price increase from January 2026).

A menu is shared with parents/carers every month.

Making payments to school

School payments for dinners, break, milk, breakfast club and afterschool clubs are made through School Money. There are other payments throughout the year also through School money e.g. music tuition, clubs, swimming, trips etc.

If you think your child might be entitled to free school meals, please visit <https://www.eani.org.uk/financial-help/free-school-meals-uniform-grants>. As well as helping families, higher numbers of pupils taking free school meals helps our budget too.

School Supplies

All children in P1-2 should use a book bag with the school logo rather than a traditional school bag. Many of the children will be able to use their existing book bag but if it has become worn and it needs replaced a new one can be purchased from the office, costing £5.

The older children should have their own pencil cases with a supply of pencils, crayons, rubber, sharpener etc. Markers will be used in school, but pupils should have a set of pencils or crayons at home for homework activities.

Written homework should be completed in pencil and colouring pencil-no markers or pens please. We encourage parents to monitor homework activities closely and insist upon a high standard of neatness and presentation.

Homework Diaries Y4-7

In an effort to make our children more independent, the teachers have introduced homework diaries for Y4-7. Children will note down all homework daily, as well as reminders and other information. To support the children in developing independence, we ask that parents review these regularly. By doing so, you can keep a track of their organisational skills, praising them for their efforts. We do also hope it will help parents keep in touch with their children's schoolwork. However, we do not consider this to be a suitable means of communicating directly with parents. Should you have any concerns, please contact your teacher in the usual ways, including contacting the office to arrange an appointment or phone call.

Health and Medication

Please ensure that the school has been informed of any allergy, illness, or condition that your child may suffer from. Medical records are managed and updated via the school office. Our First Aid officers are Mrs Nicola Long and Mrs Jane McIvor.

Medication at school

Important update: We have been instructed by the school nurse that we are not allowed to administer medicine such as Calpol or Piriton unless it has been prescribed by a doctor. Any medication to be administered must be signed into the office by the child's parent. Only medicine prescribed specifically for a child (with a dispensing label displaying the child's name and correct dosage) may be administered by designated school staff. Medication should never be kept in the child's schoolbag or in the classroom.

When your child is unwell

- Children should not be brought to school if they are unwell.
- If your child is unable to attend school due to illness, please notify the office on the morning of the first day, before 9.30am.
- Please do not send sick children to school. Even though they may want to come, we have a duty of care to all the children and staff. There are good reasons for this:
 - It is important to enjoy time at school and be well enough to join in with activities.
 - If your child has diarrhoea, vomiting or other infections please keep him/her at home until it has cleared (at least 24 hours). This is essential to prevent the unnecessary spread of infection to other children and staff.

General health reminders:

Please remember to apply *sun cream* and to provide a sun hat for your children in the warm weather.

Head lice are common among primary-aged children. Please check your child's head regularly. Many treatments are available from the local pharmacy, and many are available on prescription. It would also be useful to inform the class teacher so a general reminder could be issued (of course without highlighting your child!).

Other relevant information

Birthday invitations

Often, we are asked to give out invitations and if there is one for everyone in the class or all the boys/girls, our staff don't mind helping give these out. However, we understand that it is not possible to always invite everyone – nor should parents be expected to. Unfortunately, when invitations are only given to certain children, we are often met with a sad face asking where their invitation is or why they didn't get an envelope. Children cannot understand the genuine reasons for this and feel rejected or less popular. With the children's feelings at heart and for this reason, we ask that no party invitations are distributed in school unless there is one for everyone in the class or all boys/girls. Please ensure other invitations are given outside of school to help avoid those sad faces and awkward feelings. Nowadays social media makes spreading the word about a party much easier. You may also wish to talk to your child about why, for practical reasons, they may not get invited to all parties. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation.

Birthday Cake

Sometimes parents feel it necessary to send in a cake on the day of their child's birthday. This is a lovely thought. However, please see earlier health note re allergies and intolerances. Therefore, we ask that parents refrain from doing this and keep it for a celebration at home.



SCHOOL YEAR 2025 – 2026

August	Thurs 28 th Aug: School opens for Y1 & Y7 pupils only 9.30-12 noon Fri 29 th Aug: All Y2-7 pupils 9-1.50/2pm, Y1 Intake Group A 9.30-1pm
September	Mon 1 st Sept: All Y2-7 pupils, Y1 Intake Group B 9.30-1pm Tues 2 nd Sept: All Y2-7 pupils, Y1 Intake Group C 9.30-1pm Wed 3 rd Sept: All Y1 attend 9am-1pm every day in Sept Fri 26 th Sept – School closed for pupils and staff Mon 29 th Sept – Staff Development Day (<i>pupils do not attend</i>) Tues 30 th Sept - Y1 in from 9am to 2pm every day and 1.50pm on Fridays
October	Mon 27 th – Staff Development Day (<i>pupils do not attend</i>) Tues 28 th Oct - Fri 31 st October Mid-term Break
November	Children return to school Monday 3 rd Nov
December	Tues 23 rd Dec - School closes at 11am Wed 24 th Dec -Wed 31 st Dec (Christmas holidays)
January	Thurs 1 st Jan – Mon 5 th Jan (Christmas holidays) Tues 6 th Jan - Staff Development Day (<i>pupils do not attend</i>) Children return on Wed 7 th Jan 2026
February	Mon 9 th Feb – Fri 13 th Feb Mid-term Break Children return to school on Mon 16 th Feb
March	Mon 16 th Mar - Staff Development Day (<i>pupils do not attend</i>) Tues 17 th Mar – School closed for pupils and staff (St Patrick's Day holiday)
April	Thur 2 nd Apr - School closes at 11am Fri 3 rd Apr – Fri 10 th Apr Easter Break Children return to school Mon 13 th Apr
May	Mon 4 th May Bank Holiday Mon 25 th May Bank Holiday Tues 26th May Staff Development Day (<i>pupils do not attend</i>)
June	Tues 30 th June – School closes at 11am for summer

These dates are subject to change - *One additional closure to be confirmed*
Pupils **do not attend** on Staff Development Days.
Parents are requested not to take children on holiday during term time.