Parent Information

2025/2026

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The following information is very important to the smooth running of our school, and I would ask for your cooperation in helping us implement the procedures outlined.

Many thanks,

Mr. P. Massey
Principal

Holidays 2025/26

<u>Autumn Term</u>	
School starts	Wednesday 27th August (children will finish at noon Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, dinners will not be served)
School Development Day	**Friday 26th September** (school closed to children)
Half Term	School finishes on Friday 24th October at 12pm, school dinners will be served. School is closed for one week. **Monday 27th October is a School Development Day.** School reopens on Monday 3rd November.
Christmas Holiday	School finishes on Friday 19th December at 12pm, school dinners will be served. School is closed for two weeks.
<u>Spring Term</u>	School reopens on Monday 5th January.
Half Term	School finishes on Friday 6th February at 12pm, school dinners will be served. School is closed for one week. **Monday 9th February is a School Development Day.**
St Patrick's Day	Tuesday 17th March
Easter Holiday	School finishes on Friday 27th March at 12pm, school dinners will be served. School is closed for two weeks.
<u>Summer Term</u>	School reopens on Monday 13th April.
May Day	Monday 4th May
Bank Holiday	School finishes on Thursday 21st May at 1pm and is closed for 2 days. **Friday 22nd May is a School Development Day.**
Summer Holiday	School finishes on Tuesday 30th June at 12pm, school dinners will be served.

The School Day

8:15-8:40am: Breakfast Club – Breakfast Club commences on Monday 1st September. This is a free service funded through the Greggs Foundation. The latest time of arrival to Breakfast Club is 8:30am. Entrance is via the main door and is restricted to pupils only.

School Starting Time

8:40am: Gates and playground doors are opened, allowing pupils to line up in the playground. Their class teacher will come and collect them from the playground.

Primary 1, 2 and 3 children should line up in the Infant Playground.

Primary 4, 5, 6 and 7 children should line up in the Junior Playground.

Parents should not stay in the playground once their child has joined their class line. They will be under supervision from the class teacher.

Children should not be in the playground before 8:40am as the school gates will not be open.

On wet mornings, children should proceed straight to their classroom at 8:40am.

9:00am: Gates and playground doors are locked, and classes commence. *I would remind parents/guardians that late arrival into school can cause your children anxiety and disruption to the class they are going into.*

School Finishing Time

All classes finish at the same time.

School finishes every day at 2:30pm.

General Information

Attendance

The table below, taken from the Department of Education guidance, highlights what the percentage attendance means in days of learning missed.

100% Attendance	0 Days Missed	Excellent
95% Attendance	9 Days of Absence 1 Week and 4 Days of Learning Missed	Satisfactory
90% Attendance	19 Days of Absence 3 Weeks and 4 Days of Learning Missed	Poor
85% Attendance	28 Days of Absence 5 Weeks and 3 Days of Learning Missed	Very Poor **Referral to EWS**
80% Attendance	38 Days of Absence 7 Weeks and 3 Days of Learning Missed	Unacceptable
75% Attendance	46 Days of Absence 9 Weeks and 1 Day of Learning Missed	Unacceptable

Parents/guardians will be informed of their child's attendance at the end of each half-term.

Please note, work will not be provided for short periods of sickness (up to one week). Rather, on return to school, pupils will be given the worksheets that they have missed. These should be completed at home.

Please do not send your child into school if they are sick. The PHA Guidance on this is given later in this booklet.

Absence

- If possible, please email (info@donegallroad.belfast.ni.sch.uk) or telephone (028 9032 3018) to notify us that your child will be absent.
- You may also notify the class teacher by sending them a Seesaw message.
- Pupils arriving after 9:00am will be marked 'Late' and should enter school via the main school entrance.
- Staff will not provide work for holidays taken during term time.
- The importance of being punctual for school is so important for your child.

Abuse against Staff

We expect all parents/guardians to always treat staff with courtesy and respect. Abusive, aggressive or threatening language or behaviour towards staff will not be tolerated and may result in restricted access to school premises or further action in line with our school policies. By working together respectfully, we can ensure a positive and supportive environment for our children to thrive.

Administration of Medicine

- Most medication can be administered at home and where this is the case, it should be done so.
- Parents, or a responsible adult, may come into school to administer medication to a pupil. However, it should be noted that, only in exceptional circumstances and on completion of an 'Administration of Medication' form (available from the school office) will a member of staff take responsibility for the administration of prescribed medication.
- Staff will not administer non-prescribed medication.

Child Protection Procedures for Parents

- If you, as a parent, have a concern about your child's safety, you may speak to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Mr. P. Massey, who is also the Principal (028 9032 3018).
- If you feel that this might be inappropriate, you may speak to Mr. D. Stringer for concerns relating to a child in Primary 5, 6 or 7, or Mrs. S. Wallace for concerns relating to a child in Primary 1, 2, 3 or 4.
- If you are still concerned, you may speak to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors.
- At any time, you may talk to a social worker from Child Protection Gateway Services (028 9050 7000) or the PSNI Care Unit (028 9065 0222).

Collection of Children

- Children in P1, P2, P2/3 and P3 must be collected by someone aged 16 or over. This includes children who would have previously been collected by older siblings/relatives in P4 to P7. Children will not be released to their relative in P4 to P7 unless someone aged 16 or over is present.

Data Update

- To ensure that the data we have on file is accurate, a data collection sheet and Out of School Activities consent form will be sent to parents early in September. Please complete and return to school as soon as possible. Remember to include email addresses.

Drinks

- We encourage your child to bring water into school and they are permitted to drink this during class. Diluting juice may be provided for lunch time only. For convenience, we would ask you to use the sports-type drinks container.
- **Fizzy drinks and energy drinks are not permitted and will be confiscated.**

Entry into School

- For security reasons, parents/visitors must ring the buzzer at the main entrance and speak to a member of staff at the school office before being admitted into the school building. Parents/guardians will only be admitted to the main school building if this is absolutely necessary.
- **On no account, should anyone go straight to a classroom.**

Healthy Eating

- We encourage our children to have a balanced diet as part of a healthy lifestyle. To support this, we encourage children to bring a healthy snack for their mid-morning break.

Holidays

- As you have been notified well in advance of all holidays, please try to arrange your vacations within these dates, as prolonged absence from school often leads to interruption of work, resulting in lack of progress.
- The school will not provide work for children when they are on holiday.

Indoors

- It is school policy that children are not left unsupervised at break or lunchtime. Pupils will only be allowed to remain indoors in exceptional circumstances and if a note has been brought into the class teacher.
- Please note that if you deem your child well enough to attend school, they will be expected to go outside.

Jewellery

- We would prefer that jewellery, apart from watches, should not be worn by pupils while attending school, and no earrings, other than one pair of small, simple ear studs, may be worn for safety reasons (these should not be worn on PE days, swimming days or during any sporting activities).
- Smart watches are not allowed in school.

Labels

- Please ensure all items of clothing are clearly labelled with your child's name.

Library/Reading Books

- We expect our children to take care of reading/library books in school and those that are sent home. If any of these are lost/damaged, parents will be charged for the cost of the replacement book.

Mobile Phones

- We discourage mobile phones being brought into school; however, we realise that some parents may wish their child to have their mobile phone on them for after school childcare. If a pupil brings a mobile phone into school, it must be switched off completely (not on silent) and handed to the class teacher, who will return their phone at the end of the school day.
- **Parents should note that any misuse of a mobile phone by their child is a serious offence and will ultimately be their responsibility.**

Weekly News Sheet

- The Weekly News Sheet will be distributed to parents via Seesaw each week. It is also posted on the school's Facebook page and on the school website.

Nut Allergy

- We have several children in school who have allergic reactions to nuts. Therefore, we are a nut-free school.
- Due to various dietary requirements for medical or religious reasons, we do not allow birthday cakes/buns to be brought into school.

Parent Volunteer List

- In school, we are only allowed to invite parents to help supervise trips etc. if they have Access NI clearance. If you would like to be put on our 'Parent Volunteer List', please contact the school office for the appropriate information.

Policies

- School policies can be viewed on the school website – www.donegallroadps.com.

Physical Education

- P.E. is a compulsory aspect of the school curriculum and, as such, pupils are expected to participate unless excused on medical grounds by a doctor.
- Appropriate P.E. kit should be worn to promote personal hygiene:
- **P.E. Kit:**
    - **Primary 1-3:** Gym shoes (if possible, with Velcro strap for convenience).
    - **Primary 4-7:** Navy/black shorts or leggings, plain white t-shirt, School sweatshirt/fleece, gym shoes/trainers. P4-7 children should wear their P.E. kit to school on days they have P.E. Please do not send children in any other clothing than what is mentioned here.

- No jewellery is allowed to be worn on P.E. days or during any sporting activity.

Prohibited Items

For reasons of Health & Safety, the following items are not allowed in school:

- Smart watches.
- Portable electronic devices (e.g., Nintendo DS, Tablets)
- Jewellery – one pair of studs may be worn on the ears, to be removed for P.E. and sports-related activities. Anything beyond this is not allowed.
- Chewing gum.
- Dangerous weapons.
- Smoking/Vaping paraphernalia.
- Make-up, including false nails.
- Bicycles and scooters.
- Children's personal fidget toys – unless an agreement has been made with the SENCo and Class Teacher.

School Lunch

- A four-week menu is issued to parents at the beginning of the school year and is also available on the school website.
- A school lunch costs £2.60 per day and should be ordered through the school office.
- Children may of course bring a packed lunch to school; this will be eaten in the classroom under supervision.

School Grounds

- Parents/guardians must ensure that children in their care are always supervised. School will not accept responsibility for any injury sustained while a child is in their parent/guardian's care.
- Dogs (apart from assistance dogs) are not permitted within the school grounds at any time.
- Smoking/vaping is not permitted anywhere on the school grounds.

Seesaw

- Seesaw is one of the main ways your child's teachers will communicate with you. Please ensure that you can access your child's learning portal. Contact the school if you need assistance with this.
- Staff members will not monitor Seesaw messages during teaching times. Urgent messages should be phoned to the school office.
- Staff members will not respond to Seesaw messages before 8:40am and after 4:00pm.

Swimming

- Swimming is offered to Primary 5, 5/6, 6 and 7 children and all children are expected to participate unless excused in medical grounds, which must be followed up in writing. Further details will be issued to these year groups.

Text Messaging Service

- We use the text messaging service to inform parents of announcements and reminders regarding school events throughout the year.

Timekeeping

- We expect children to arrive and get collected from school on time. If you are delayed, please inform the school office so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Uniform and Appearance

- Pupils are expected to maintain a high standard of personal appearance and to wear school uniform in school. You will be notified in advance of non-uniform days.
- A small stock of uniform is kept in school for provision throughout the year.

GIRLS' UNIFORM

  - School polo-shirt and sweatshirt/fleece.
  - Black skirt or trousers or school tracksuit bottoms.
  - Black socks or tights.
  - Black shoes.

- *Blue and white gingham check summer dresses can be worn in the warmer months.*

BOYS' UNIFORM

- School polo-shirt and sweatshirt/fleece.
- Black trousers or school tracksuit bottoms.
- Black socks.
- Black shoes.
- *Grey/black unbranded shorts can be worn in the warmer months.*

How can I contact my child's teacher?

The link between home and school is important to us. We provide Parent/Teacher consultations in October and February, as well as a written report at the end of the school year. If a teacher has a concern that cannot wait until a consultation, they will contact the parent/guardian.

We recognise that there are times when parents/guardians will need to speak with their child's teacher. An appointment must be made through the school office to facilitate this, providing the reason for the meeting (e.g., safeguarding concern, bullying or urgent issue that cannot wait until next consultation).

The office staff will relay your request to the teacher, who will provide a date and time for the telephone call/face-to-face appointment. The office staff will contact you to confirm the telephone call/appointment details.

Please note, Seesaw **should not** be used to arrange appointments with your child's teacher. Teachers have been asked to direct you to the school office to arrange an appointment should this happen. Seesaw may be used to relay information that would be difficult for the child to explain to the teacher (e.g., a particular family situation; illness in the family). Seesaw should not be used to communicate urgent messages.

Parental Complaints Procedure Flow Chart

INFORMAL STAGE

Step 1

Speak with the Class Teacher

INFORMAL STAGE

Step 2

If the complaint is unresolved following Step 1, or if the complaint is against a member of the non-teaching staff, contact the Principal to arrange a meeting. If the complaint is against the Principal, to to Formal Stage, Step 3.

FORMAL STAGE

Step 3

If the complaint is unresolved following Steps 1 and 2, or procedures are to be initiated at Step 3, write to the Principal or Chairperson of the Board of Governors.

FORMAL STAGE

Step 4

The Chairperson of the Board of Governors will make a preliminary investigation and/or refer to the Complaints Sub-Committee for its investigation.

APPEALS PROCESS

Step 5

Written request to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors to have a complaint heard by the Appeals Sub-Committee.

Do I need to keep my child off school?

Whooping Cough	48 Hours after commencing antibiotics
Chicken Pox	Until all spots have crusted over
Conjunctivitis	No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed
Diarrhoea & Vomiting	48 hours from last episode
Glandular Fever	No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed
Hand, foot & mouth	No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed
Measles or German Measles	4 days from onset of rash
Mumps	5 days from onset of swelling
Scabies	Until after first treatment
Scarlet Fever	24 hours after commencing antibiotics
Slapped Cheek	No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed
Impetigo	Until lesions are crusted & healed or 48 Hours after commencing antibiotics
Flu	Until recovered
Head Lice	No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed
Threadworms	No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed
Tonsillitis	No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed

HSC Public Health Agency

Applying for

Free School Meals & Uniform Allowance

If you require help...

www.eani.org.uk/fsm

028 9041 8044

mealsanduniform@eani.org.uk

1. Are you eligible?

You must be:

- in receipt of a qualifying benefit OR
- be an Asylum Seeker supported by the Home Office Asylum Support Assessment Team (ASAT).

Qualifying 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 household income of £16,190 or less;
- Universal credit and have net household earnings not exceeding £15,000 per year.

2. What documentation do you need?

You will be asked to upload proof that you are receiving a qualifying benefit:

- Tax Credits Award Notice
- Universal Credit Payments breakdown or
- Proof of Benefit letter (if you are in receipt of Income Support, Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Related Employment and Support Allowance or the Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit).

3. What else do you need?

- National Insurance Number
- Childrens' names
- Dates of Birth
- Schools they will be attending
- Address
- E-mail and telephone number
- Bank or building society account and sort code details.

4. Where do you apply?

Apply for Free School Meals and Uniform Allowance for the new school year beginning September, through the Education Authority's online portal, EA Connect. If you haven't already registered an EA Connect account, it's quick and easy to do. Information can be found on the EA website.

5. What happens next?

We aim to process applications within 4 weeks. However, in the busy period of June to September, this can take up to 5 weeks. Please do not contact EA for an update on your application within the 5 weeks of submitting your application. If you have provided incorrect or insufficient supporting documentation, you will receive a tailored email advising you to resubmit your application with details of the correct documentation you need to provide.

You will receive an email from EA once your application has been approved and processed.

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