



BALLYLIFFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL

142 Ballinderry Bridge Road
Cookstown, Co Tyrone
BT80 0AY

PRINCIPAL: Mrs. Fiona Conway

Tel / Fax: 028 79418388

Email: info@ballylifford.cookstown.ni.sch.uk

Website: www.ballyliffordps.com

Twitter: @BallyliffordPS

Wednesday 6th September 2023

Welcome Back!

We would like to take this opportunity to commend all children for settling in so quickly to the routine of school as we begin our new school year. We have been blessed with such beautiful weather this week and hopefully it continues. The children all look very smart in their full school uniform and wear it with pride, contributing to the ethos of our school. Please ensure all items of school uniform are labelled clearly with your child's name.

I would like to give a special mention to all the new P.1 children, who are settling in so well and are becoming familiar with the school routine. I pray that we all have a happy, safe and successful year in Ballylifford PS and we all look forward to learning and growing together.

Data Collection and Parental Permission Agreement Forms

Please remember to complete your Data Collection form for each individual child and Parental Permission agreement form and return to school as soon as possible. If your child has a medical need, please ensure that school has an up-to-date care plan. Old inhalers have been sent home and we would appreciate if they could be replaced at your earliest convenience. If your child has a new medical need, please bring it to our attention asap.

Child Protection and Safeguarding



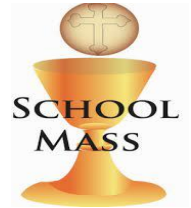
A leaflet was sent home last week highlighting Safeguarding arrangements within our school. Mrs Sweeney is the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and Ms Hurl is the Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection. The children are aware of our School Safety Net, and they will be reminded regularly throughout the school year during PDMU lessons and whole school assemblies. If you have any worries or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to Mrs Sweeney or Ms Hurl.

Welcome Kelly and Meadhbh!

We would like to welcome Kelly Mulholland to our staff. Kelly will be an additional Classroom assistant working in our P.1/2 class this year. We hope that Kelly will be very happy in our school. We would also like to welcome Meadhbh back to our P.5/6/7 class – Meadhbh will be supporting KS2 until Rosemary returns. We continue to keep Rosemary in our prayers and wish her a speedy recovery.

Beginning of New School Year Mass

On Thursday 28th September at 10am, Fr Donnelly will lead us in our Beginning of New School Year Mass in St. Patrick's Church, Ballinderry. The children and staff will be involved in the readings, prayers and songs. Parents/Carers can attend mass or watch online via the church webcam.



Credit Union



Credit Union savings recommenced on Tuesday 5th September. We encourage as many children to save with the Credit Union as possible. All new savers are very welcome. Thank you to Mrs Philomena McGuckin in advance for collecting the weekly savings.

Friends of Ballylifford AGM

The Friends of Ballylifford will be holding their AGM on Wednesday 13th September at 6:00pm in Ballylifford PS. The committee will be discussing events for this school year. All parents interested in joining our PTA are very welcome to attend. **We would really encourage new parents to come along as we would be extremely grateful of your support.**

Tin Whistle

Mrs Sweeney will begin Tin whistle with P.3/4 children on Wednesday 13th September and P.5/6/7 children on Friday 15th September. It is extremely important that all children bring their tin whistle to school on these days and take time to practice at home regularly. P.3 children can purchase a tin whistle from the school office next week – Cost £5.



KS2 Swimming



Swimming for our P.5/6/7 class will begin on Thursday 14th September. Cost of swimming is £3.50 to cover weekly swimming lesson and bus. More details in additional letter enclosed.

Staff Development Day

School will be closed on Friday 22nd September to facilitate the teaching staff attending a Primary School Cluster and School Development planning session.

EU Day – Non-Uniform Day



This year we will celebrate European Day of Languages on Tuesday 26th September. Each class will celebrate a different country. Children can come to school wearing the following colours.

- **P.1/2** – France (all children to wear red, blue and white)
- **P.3/4** – Italy (all children to wear red, white and green)
- **P.5/6/7** – Ireland (all children to wear Green)

Feel Good Friday

Our first 'Feel Good Friday' for this year will take place on **Friday 29th September**. Children can come to school wearing their own clothes and bring one sweet/chocolate treat for their extended break time. On these days, children will participate in Mindfulness and well-being activities in class.

School Photographer

The photographer will visit school on Monday 16th October to take individual, family and P.1/P.7 class photos. There will be an opportunity for family photos with younger siblings at 8:45am.



Morning/Breakfast Club

From **Monday 11th September**, all pupils can avail of our Morning/Breakfast club from 8:10am to 8:30am. If your child is attending Morning Club for the first time, please sign a permission slip at the school office. School doors will be open at 8:30am for children who are not attending Morning club to help parents who are travelling to work. Mrs Conway and John our Caretaker will be at the front door when children arrive and they will wait in the hall until 8:45am. At 8:45am, children will go to their classroom, organise their belongings for class and complete 'Busy activities' until all children have arrived. Registration, morning prayers and class will begin at 9am.




P1 and P.2 After School Club 2 – 3pm

From Monday 11th September P.2 children can avail of our After School Club from 2:00pm to 3:00pm. **From Monday 18th September P.1 children can attend.** The cost is £2 per day or £10 for the week.

School Attendance

If your child is absent from school, a note to explain his/her absence must be sent into school on the day your child returns. Absent notes are essential for DE attendance records. The poster below highlights why regular attendance at school is so important.




WHY ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL IS SO IMPORTANT –

If a child of compulsory school age is registered at a school it is essential that they attend their school regularly and maintain a pattern of good attendance throughout their school career.

Excellent attendance at school is important to allow a child or young person to fulfil their potential.


Below are just some of the key reasons why it is so important children attend school:

- To learn.
- To have fun.
- To make new friends.
- To experience new things in life.
- To develop awareness of other cultures, religion, ethnicity and gender differences.
- To achieve.
- To gain qualifications.
- To develop new skills.
- To build confidence and self-esteem.
- To have the best possible start in life.



**Miss School -
Miss Out!!**

If attendance falls below 85%, parents/carers will be contacted by the EWO (Education Welfare Officer). Below 85% attendance is equivalent to children missing 5 weeks and 3 days of school and learning. See table below.



EVERY SCHOOL DAY COUNTS –

Every single day a child is absent from school equates to a day of lost learning.

Attendance percentages can be misleading.

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
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

Dinner Money

Please send Dinner Money in a labelled money bag or envelope and place inside your child's homework sack so that it can be easily collected by class teachers each morning.

Healthy Break

We ask all children to have a healthy snack for Break time daily. Healthy snacks can include pancake, plain biscuit, yoghurt, cereal bar, fruit and cheese. If your child needs his/her apple/fruit cut up, we ask you to please do this at home and send to school in a sealed container. Please remember that we are a NUT **free** school – no food containing NUTS or traces of NUTS are permitted in school at any time to ensure the health and safety of all our pupils.



Golden Rules

At the start of each school year, we will be reminding children of our school 'Golden Rules' of Behaviour. Class teachers will be discussing class rules this week and highlighting the rewards for following the school rules. Some rewards include Stationary treat from Prize box, extra time outside, homework pass, iPad time, sitting beside a friend. Children will also be reminded of the consequences which include verbal reminder, one-minute Time-out, loss of play at Break or Lunch time, Behaviour note sent home. Please discuss the 'Golden Rules' with your child at home – we promote positive behaviour at all times so that children can maximise their full learning potential.

Listening skills is one thing some children need to improve, and we ask for your support and co-operation – talk to your child about the importance of listening and working quietly especially during Literacy and Numeracy time. We are extremely lucky to have such well-mannered and well-behaved children in Ballylifford PS.



P.7 SEAG Entrance Assessment

Transfer club will recommence on Friday 8th September from 2pm-3pm. Children must bring their Transfer file to school every Monday and Friday.

Registration for SEAG Entrance Assessment closes on Friday 22nd September. You will be able to register on the SEAG website.

There is an administration fee of £20 to register a child to sit the Entrance Assessment. Parents/Carers of pupils with a Free School Meals Entitlement (FSM) are exempt from paying the £20 fee.



The SEAG Entrance Assessment will consist of 2 papers. Paper 1 will take place on Saturday 11th November and Paper 2 on Saturday 25th November. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Homework

We ask Parents/Carers to please sign and date your child's homework and Homework Diary/Reading Record every night. We are working in partnership to help your child reach his/her full potential and appreciate your support with completion of daily homework. If your child is unable to complete his/her homework, please send a note to your child's teacher explaining why homework is not completed.

Dates for your Diary

- **Parent Teacher Meetings** – Tuesday 24th October and Wednesday 25th October. All children will go home at 1pm on both these days to facilitate these meetings.
- **Halloween Dress Up** – Friday 27th October – All children will finish for Halloween break at 2pm.
- **School Closed** – Monday 30th October to Friday 3rd November (Halloween Break)
- **Christmas Dinner** – Friday 8th December – All children will go home at 1pm
- **Christmas Carol Service** – Wednesday 13th December at 7pm

Thank you!

Thank you for taking the time to read the information enclosed. We will continue to use the school website and Schools NI app to communicate regularly with parents. If you are not receiving messages via the Schools NI app, please update the app by selecting the 'More' option and then 'Help/Support'.

Your sincerely,

Mrs Fiona Conway
Principal

