

Edenderry Primary School



Autumn Update 2023

Your child or children will no doubt be keeping you updated on school life as the term has progressed. With this update, we aim to provide you with some important reminders and an update on further changes we have planned for the weeks ahead.

Remembrance Assembly

A huge thank you to our P4 pupils and staff for their brilliant Remembrance Assembly last Friday morning. The audience, including our serving and ex-servicemen, were treated to a beautiful act of remembrance and the school again received the Royal British Legion's best local school award for raising £1,500 last year through the sale of poppy merchandise. Thank you to Mr McClean and the P7 pupils for their ongoing work to support their work of the Royal British Legion and to our kitchen staff who provided such beautiful food for our visiting servicemen.

Digital Devices

On a number of occasions this term, children have been identified inappropriately using mobile phones, smart watches and other digital devices in school. This includes messaging externally and photographing other children. This is a serious breach of our child protection and appropriate use of ICT policies and it is an issue we take very seriously. Children must not bring digital devices into school. To ensure the safety of others, if children are found in possession of such devices, they will be removed and the child's parents will be requested to come and collect the device from school. Continued infringement of these policies will be referred to the Board of Governors.

Specialist-Informed Medical Care

You will appreciate that we have a number of children in school who have a medical diagnosis that requires very specific medical care. This includes conditions such as asthma, diabetes, anaphylaxis, epilepsy, etc. We are currently reviewing the processes we use to confirm which children require this level of care and how we can best provide it. Over the next few weeks, we will re-engage with the parents of these children to clarify the details of any medical care confirmed by a specialist. If your child has a medical care plan provided by a GP or other medical specialist, please ensure this is accurate, up-to-date and shared with us. This also includes any specific medication required. This is the only way we can be sure of providing your child with the level of care they require. Thank you.

School Arrival and Departures

The governors remain concerned about the challenges parents face to safely leave and collect children from school. We fully appreciate the limitations in parking spaces available, however, to ensure the safety of all of our children, please be patient at these key times of the day and only park in locations that do not impact on the safety of the children. Specifically, please do not block neighbouring developments or driveways, do not enter the staff car park and do not park cars on double yellow lines, the roundabout or areas marked as 'no parking'. The children will soon be undertaking a survey of car and pedestrian practices during these peak times. They themselves will advise you further on the issues identified and potential, safer alternatives, over the next few weeks.



Relationships and Sexual Education (RSE)

The teaching of RSE is mandatory for all primary school pupils and it is the responsibility of the Board of Governors at every school to ensure that a comprehensive RSE programme is delivered which meets the needs of the children. This is something that Edenderry has been doing effectively for many years. Over the past few months, however, there has been significant media interest and debate in the recently updated Department of Education (DE) guidance on the teaching of RSE in schools. Much of this has been unnecessary and unhelpful. Please be absolutely assured that if the governors in Edenderry ever feel the need to make changes to the current preventative curriculum here, that would only happen following extensive and carefully explained discussions with the relevant parents. If, at any stage, the governors feel there is a need to consider changes to the programme, we will discuss this with you.

Changing for PE

For many years, the children have used the very small rooms on either side of the stage to change for PE and extra-curricular activities. Following a review of these areas, and based on class sizes, we have decided that they are insufficient for whole class changing. Subsequently, we have decided to apply the current DE guidance relating to the changing for PE. From this week, all children will be changing for PE in their own classroom. On their specific PE days only, children will now be permitted to come to school wearing their school polo shirt, instead of their shirt and tie, under their pullover. The children should also wear a pair of shorts under their trousers/skirt and bring appropriate footwear. We are, however, determined to maintain the longstanding standards of uniform in school, so please ensure your child is their full uniform on all other days and that they continue to wear black shoes in line with the school uniform guidance. This change will also ensure PE activity time is maximised on these days. On days when children are attending extra-curricular activities, they will now change in the toilet area closest to their classroom, place their uniform into a bag and leave the bag in the assembly hall, for collection after the activity. Later in the year, we will be further reviewing our school uniform policy and we will ask for your views on this at that time.



Christmas Carol Service – Save the Date!

Going forward, the school will continue to implement a rotational system for school Christmas performances and carol services. This means that all children are given the opportunity to perform at various stages during their time in Edenderry. This rotation also ensures that the extra preparation required for these events, which impacts significantly on other school activities, is rotated for both the children and staff. This year, our P5, P6 and P7 children will host a carol service. They will be accompanied by the school choir. The carol service will be held on the morning of the 15th December. We will provide you with further, more specific details closer to the time.

Edenderry PTA

The work of the Edenderry PTA has been severely impacted since the COVID pandemic. Later in the year, however, we hope to reintroduce the PTA here in school. Our new principal, Mr Blevins, will be engaging with former and potentially new members of the PTA to discuss this early in the New Year.

School Logo

Edenderry Primary School currently uses a range of school logos on the uniform, school signage, letterheads and documentation. In an attempt to clarify the school identity and ensure a more consistent use, the Board of Governors is now going to review the logo. Whilst it may be updated to ensure relevance for a digital generation, please be assured that any new logo agreed will still feature the renowned Edenderry acorn. Along with this, we hope to add new school signage to the building and make the arrival areas more welcoming for visitors. We very much look forward to sharing this with you over the weeks and months ahead.

New Lunchtime Routines

Our newly-introduced lunchtime routines are making a really positive difference at this time of the day. The children are now using the dinner hall much more efficiently. We have significantly fewer spillages and a much more appropriate noise level. Thanks to Avner in P7, who suggested the use of a digital decibel reader, we are all now much more aware of the noise being made. Please be assured that, contrary to one report, we have no intention of stopping the children from talking at lunchtimes! The children themselves identified the fact that no-one could hear themselves think during dinners and changes needed to be made.

The Future is Paperless and Cashless

Considering the way most people now pay and communicate, by the start of next term, the school will move to a new system of completely paperless communications and cashless school payments. The changes may also result in amendments to the school website. This is something which most other schools introduced some time ago and something a number of parents have been requesting. In moving to digital communication, we will be able to communicate with you in a more direct and relevant way. For example, you will get information directly to your phone via an Edenderry Primary School App, that is only relevant to your child or children. And in moving to cashless payments, we will remove the Sunday night/Monday morning challenge of looking for coins. It will also significantly reduce the classroom time spent collecting and checking that all is accurate each Monday morning. For us to do this effectively, however, we need to be sure that the mobile telephone contact numbers we have for your child/children are accurate. If you have changed your mobile number since the start of September or you are unsure if your number is accurately recorded in school, please advise the clerical staff and we can check, and if necessary, amend that for you. If our records are not accurate, you will not be able to pay for dinners, trips, swimming, etc. using the new system or receive our communications, so please help us with this.