

# Edenderry Primary School



# Christmas Update 2023

This update includes: important car park safety reminders and guidance for the busy days leading up to the Christmas holidays.

## Sports Tournament at Lurgan College

Congratulations to the senior boys and girls who represented Edenderry at last week's Sports Tournament at Lurgan College. The hockey, football and tag rugby teams all thoroughly enjoyed a day of competition against other local schools and competed brilliantly in the challenging weather. A big thank you to Mr Mitchell for organising and to Barry who, along with Mr Mitchell, coached from the side-lines.

## Flu Vaccinations

We want to say 'well done' and 'thank you' to all of the boys and girls who received their flu vaccination last week in school. Following the vaccinations, a member of the medical team that administered them, came to the office to complement the children on their attitude and their manners during the process. This makes us very proud, and it is important that our entire school community knows about and celebrates a compliment like this. As the old African proverb states, 'It takes a village to raise a child.'

## Reverse Advent Calendar Hampers

A huge thank you to everyone who contributed towards our reverse advent calendar collection to fill food hampers for Portadown Cares. Thanks to your generosity, on Friday we presented the charity with 44 filled hampers and an additional £200. What a special Edenderry gift to those who need it most this Christmas. More photographs can be seen on the school website.



## Important School Car Park Guidance

We are increasingly concerned about the number of drivers who park on footpaths, double yellow lines, pedestrian crossings, and even the roundabout in the car park. It is particularly frustrating that some drivers are parking in these places on occasions when there are parking spaces vacant. This poor parking increases even more during poor weather. Undoubtedly, parking in these areas is significantly increasing the risk for our children and therefore it **MUST NOW STOP**.

Regardless of the weather or how late you are, if you drive into the car park and there are no spaces available, you **MUST** drive back out and park outside the school grounds. **The roadway is for a quick drop-off only.** The children should exit the vehicle on the passenger side close to the building and they should never be walking on the road or roundabout. So, going forward, our simple but important advice is not to leave the driver's seat if you do not have a parking space. Please consider this guidance carefully and please also pass it on to any other family members of childminders who may collect your children from school. Your support with this would be greatly appreciated.

## Parking for Nursery Nativity and School Carol Service

The above guidance is particularly important for the forthcoming Christmas events in school. Please also be respectful of our neighbours on these days and do not obstruct their property when parking outside. Thank you.

## Applications for P1 (2024/2025)

P1 applications for September 2024 will go live on the EA website at 12 noon on Tuesday 9 January 2024. A new updated school prospectus will be available on the school website and the new app before that date. Prospective parents are welcome to meet with Mr Blevins if you are still considering your best options. Please telephone the office to arrange this.

Starting School!

## Extreme Weather Plans

During the winter months, there is an increased likelihood that we could face challenges due to ice or snow. As well as creating treacherous conditions, this weather can also lead to heating and water problems for us. Please be assured that school will only ever close in extreme circumstances and we will do everything we can to keep it open, regardless of the circumstances. The biggest challenges we face are loss of water, loss of heat, unsafe arrival areas or insufficient staff getting to school to ensure adequate supervision of the children. If we ever face any of these situations in the weeks ahead, we will immediately place an announcement on the school website so please check there first on days when there is extreme weather. From January, we will be able to message all families and staff directly from the new school app if we are forced to close at very short notice.

## Spring Term Extra-Curricular Activities

Our Healthykidz after-school activities programme ends this Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December. It is important that parents know that the guidance from Teaching Unions, is that staff should still not engage in extra-curricular activities, and this is the norm in most schools. This guidance relates specifically to the ongoing industrial action regarding teachers' pay and conditions and the fact that teachers who take after-school activities, do this in a voluntary capacity and without payment. Later this week, the staff will discuss this guidance with a view to identifying the best way of maintaining our children's access to extra-curricular activities. Our choices are limited, particularly in the winter months, by the fact we only have one hall and all of our classrooms are used up until 3.00 pm. Consequently, on wet days, only one group can utilise this hall. Either next week or during the first week of the new term, we will update you on our discussions and the agreed plan for the remainder of this school year.

## Christmas Events Planner

We have a packed schedule over the next two weeks with lots of rehearsals leading up to the Nursery Nativity and the Key Stage 2 Carol Service. The planner below will help ensure everyone knows what is happening and when!

<b>Friday 15</b>	Key Stage 2 Carol Service
<b>Tuesday 19</b>	JLSC, SLSC and ASC Christmas Celebration
<b>Wednesday 20</b>	Nursery Nativity Christmas Jumper Day Christmas Party Box Lunch
<b>Thursday 21</b>	Non-uniform day Assembly Hall Film Morning (all pupils) All children finish at 12.10 pm

**School reopens on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2024.**

## Christmas Party Box Lunch

We are having a special Christmas Party Box Lunch on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> December. All children can still order a lunch for Wednesday, but orders and payment must be in by next Monday.

## Christmas Jumper Day

To coincide with the Christmas Party Box Lunch Day, children can come to school in a Christmas Jumper. Any alternative jumper can be worn on that day, but we are encouraging those who already have one, to wear their Christmas jumper. We are not collecting any donations; it is simply an extra bit of Christmas fun for the children.

## Christmas Carol Service

Our Key Stage 2 carol service will start at 9.30 am on Thursday. All P5, P6 and P7 parents are welcome to attend. Please aim to be seated by 9.15 am at the latest.



## Christmas Greetings from Mr Blevins

As we approach the end of the autumn term and I personally enter my 11<sup>th</sup> week as principal of Edenderry, I want to say another huge thank you. Firstly, thank you to the children for your special welcome to your school and more importantly, for listening to me and for giving your best each day. Your behaviour and manners are a credit to your parents and the staff here in school. Secondly, a huge thank you to all of our staff, particularly for your willingness to consider the new or alternative ways of working that we have introduced in recent weeks. Together we have achieved a huge amount in a very short space of time, and I am confident that over time, everyone will see the benefits of what we are trying to do. Thirdly, I want to thank our governors for your wisdom and guidance. All of what our governors do is voluntary and so much of what they do goes unseen, but I can assure you that every discussion they have, and every decision taken focuses on what is best for our children. And finally, I want to say a huge thank you to our parents for your welcome, your encouragement and your patience as the school has transitioned to a new principal. At times like this, decisions take a little longer and communication can be slow, but this is something you will see change dramatically in the New Year ahead.

On behalf of the children, the staff and the Board of Governors, I wish everyone a happy Christmas and prosperous New Year.

