



# Newsletter

6<sup>th</sup> May 21

Dear Parents

It's hard to believe that we are now into May and are approaching the end of this very different school year. Even though restrictions are easing, please continue to be mindful that Covid 19 is still in our community. Continue to follow the PHA guidelines and keep your children at home if you suspect that they, or someone in your household has symptoms. Please inform school if your child is off due to Covid-19. Please continue to wear face masks at drop off and pick up times. We want to continue to keep our school community safe.

## EXTRA-CURRICULAR SPORTS

The Department of Education is now permitting the resumption of outdoor extra-curricular sport. We are offering activities for P4-7 in May and June and have planned these activities in class bubbles, as advised by the Department. We will be implementing mitigating measures to ensure the safety of our pupils and staff.

These activities will run from **2.50pm-3.45pm, Mon-Thurs**. Hopefully there is something to suit every child from P4-7. We have concentrated on the older children, especially P7, who have missed out on so many sporting events and experiences this year, due to Covid. Hopefully this will give them a taster of some sports before they move to their post primary schools.

Key stage one pupils will hopefully get to experience these activities again next school year.

Please read the timetable (sent home yesterday) carefully and choose the activities your child wishes to attend. Please complete the reply slip for each child and return with payment, (if required) to their class teacher as soon as possible, as there may be a limit to some activities. Please send your child on the days of their activities in their PE kit, with navy tracksuit bottoms, school jumper or hoodie, trainers and a coat as we will be outside unless there is heavy rain.



**Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> June** and our practice day will be Monday 7<sup>th</sup> June.

Please send pupils in their PE kits on both these days. Currently the Department of Education does not permit parents to come to school for events such as this. We therefore plan to run our sports day with only the staff and pupils and we really appreciate that at least we can do this. We hope that all the pupils will be able to sit in their class bubbles (socially distanced) and watch the other classes. We hope to record activities and post these on Google Classroom or the school website to enable parents to see some of the events. If restrictions change, we will inform you immediately.

## CYCLING PROFICIENCY

This continues each **Monday and Friday 7<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> May and 4<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> June** for P7 pupils. It is lovely to the P7s outside having fun, while learning an essential life skill. If you feel your child is safe to cycle to school or home alone, please remember to send a permission letter to Mrs Allen or Mr Crawford. The roads around school are very busy and the pupils have obviously not completed their cycling proficiency and road safety awareness course yet.

## AQE

### Message from AQE dated Friday 30 April 2021

'We apologise for the slight delay in the opening of registrations for the 2021/22 academic year. As the safety and well-being of the children is our top priority, we are continuing to monitor the situation regarding the Covid-19 restrictions in parallel with ongoing discussions with our member schools. We aim to have this updated no later than 14th May. We greatly appreciate your patience.'

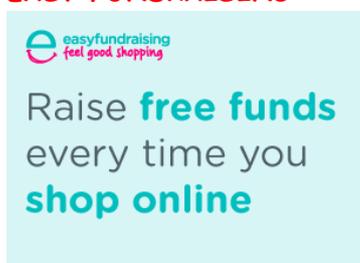
## FUNDRAISING

As you are aware we have not had an active PTA this year due to Covid-19, therefore we have been unable to continue to fundraise. We were delighted and very grateful to a local company for their very generous donation of £2,500 to our school fund. We hope to put this towards developing a play area with a wooden trim trail for all our pupils in the Nursery and the main school to enjoy.

If anyone has any other fundraising ideas that we could do before the end of the year, please let me know your ideas.

We are very grateful to a member of the PTA, Mrs Manton, who managed to secure two £1000 ABC Council grants for ICT equipment. We have been able to purchase additional ICT equipment with this money and we were able to loan devices to families who needed them during remote learning.

## EASY FUNDRAISING



Please consider raising funds for the school via the PTA's Easy Fundraising online service. Shopping doesn't cost you a penny more, but as you make purchases online items through Amazon, Ebay, M&S, Tesco, Argos, Boden and many many more shops you can make a donation to the PTA. All you do is register (it's good to select the "Donation Reminder" option) and start shopping. Please give it a go and encourage your friends and family to do so too - it is free money

to benefit the children of Orchard County Primary School and Nursery! Please register by clicking the link below: <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/orchardcountyprimaryschoolpta/>

Once you have joined, the next time you shop online, start at [easyfundraising.org.uk](https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) and log in. If you shop with your phone or tablet you can download the [easy fundraising app](#).

## DEFIBRILLATOR

We were delighted to receive a very generous donation of a new defibrillator from a local company who have family members attending our school. Our previous defibrillator could not be repaired or maintained. The new defibrillator will be located inside the school building and will be there if needed. The staff have all been trained in its use but hopefully we will never have to use it.



## ASSESSMENTS

Pupils have been completing assessments this week and this will continue next week. This will help us to identify any gaps in the children's learning. The staff are all delighted with how the children are progressing after returning to school. Those children who were engaged during remote learning, following the videos and explanations and daily tasks set by their teacher have therefore followed their normal curriculum and are coping very well with their assessments. The staff really want to thank you for the great job that you did guiding your children through the work. Unfortunately, those pupils who were not engaged in daily learning have found the transition back to school more difficult and this is showing in their assessment outcomes.

I am very proud of the level of dedication and commitment the staff displayed throughout remote learning. They were committed to providing the best education possible, under the circumstances and from looking at the results so far, their dedication to their pupils has really paid off.

## REPORTS

School reports will be issued to all parents, week beginning Monday 21<sup>st</sup> June.

### **SUMMER UNIFORM- Term 3**

Summer uniform for girls is the red and white gingham dress and white socks. Boys and girls may wear a red polo shirt instead of the shirt and tie. This should be worn with their normal grey skirt, grey school shorts or trousers.

### **ENGAGE PROGRAMME**

The Engage programme will continue throughout May and June. Miss Bothwell will continue to lead this. The focus will be offering the children support within the areas of emotional well-being, literacy and numeracy.

**HOLIDAY** Friday 28<sup>th</sup> & Mon 31<sup>st</sup> May Bank Holiday

### **MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK 10<sup>th</sup>- 16<sup>th</sup> May**

The theme of Mental Health Awareness week this year is 'nature' so we plan to host a 'Great Big Purple Picnic Day' on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> May to raise awareness of positive mental health in NI.

Looking after our mental health is something we all need to think about, particularly after the year we have had.

One in five people in NI will show signs of a mental illness during their life. One in ten children will experience a diagnosable mental health disorder.

We plan next Friday to have a picnic lunch outside, in our bubbles. Dinners will be served outside and children can eat their packed lunch outside. Packed lunch pupils may bring a picnic blanket to sit on. Pupils may bring something purple for their break or lunch or may wear something purple (it will be a non-uniform day).

We ask that pupils bring in a donation for Action Mental Health. AMH will be coming into school this month to complete two workshops with the P6/7 & P5/6 classes. These workshops are always excellent and are really good in getting our pupils to think about the importance of good mental health.

Hopefully we get good weather next Friday.



### **NURSERY and P1 ADMISSION**

Places have now been allocated to our nursery and P1 pupils for September 2021. We were oversubscribed this year in both and were very disappointed that some pupils from our nursery did not get a place in our P1. The Governors requested an increase to our admission number. The Department did increase our admission number slightly but as neighbouring schools still had available places and some pupils lived closer to these schools, further places were refused. We wish those nursery pupils who are moving to another school, best wishes for P1.

### **P7 FINAL ASSEMBLY -Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> June**

Due to Department's guidance we will not be able to have parents into school but we hope to record this event so we can share it with parents.

We plan to have a FUN DAY on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> June for P7. This will be a non-uniform day for P7 only, with lots of special activities. This will be their last day at primary school. They will not be required to attend on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> June.

**COVID REMINDERS** Children should not attend school if:

- they appear unwell
- they, or a member of their household, displays any symptoms of COVID-19

Please contact the PHA for further advice.

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus/covid-19-information-public>

Thank you for your continued support.

**J McMillan**

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