



Building
together
for our future.

**Braidside Integrated Primary
and Nursery School**
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Principal: J McAuley
www.braidside.co.uk

24/02/26

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We have now passed the half-way point of this school year. Thank you to everyone who attended parent interviews before half term. It is positive that so many parents took the opportunity to meet with the teachers and engage in discussions on the children's progress. As I noted at the Meet & Greet sessions back in September, we encourage you to contact school if you have any worries or concerns about your children. By telephoning the school office or emailing the info account (info@braidsideintegratedps.ballymena.ni.sch.uk), arrangements can be made for either a return telephone call or an in-person appointment.

There's lots of information to share in this Newsletter, lots of events and activities ahead and parents/ carers are encouraged to visit our website regularly for a wide range of school information and events/ opportunities in the wider community.



RE & Collective Worship in Schools

Following the UK Supreme Court judgement on RE and collective worship in NI schools in November, schools recently received an update from the Department of Education (DENI).

This outlined the following information:

1. A review of the RE syllabus will be undertaken which will involve primary and post-primary teachers from all sectors and which will engage with churches, teachers, school leaders, parents and young people. A draft is to be produced by summer 2026, followed by new regulations in Autumn 2026 and implementation from September 2027.
2. Schools should continue to deliver RE to comply with the law as it stands.
3. Schools should also endeavour to ensure RE provision includes broader content beyond the current syllabus e.g. introducing other world religions. Parents will be aware that we implemented the use of the "Faith & Belief" document this year, to assist in our delivery of RE in school. This document has enabled us to continue to deliver broader current including world religions and moral issues. We are well placed to meet this requirement.
4. Schools are also required to have arrangements in place for withdrawal from RE, ensuring records are made and retained.

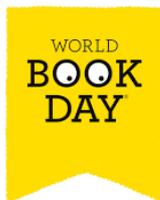
I hope this update allows parents to be assured we are aware of the developments following the Supreme Court judgement and continue to review our provision in school.

Integrated Education Month 2026

This year the theme for Integrated Education Month is [“Better Together”](#). During the month of March, we will spend time talking about the ways in which we can all work better together in our school community. We hope this will be an enjoyable time for all our children. Look out for photos later in the month!

Sustrans- The Big Walk and Wheel, March 26

The Big Walk and Wheel takes place from 24th -27th March when we ask all our children to travel to school either by foot or by using active travel. We welcome bikes, scooters and our best foot forward! As in previous years, we intend to have active sessions on our turning circle for the children. On those days there will be restricted access during school hours and we appreciate your support with this. During the Big Walk and Wheel, we are competing with other schools across NI and we record all the numbers of children who travel actively – so we really do want to see and encourage as much participation as possible. This year Sustrans are offering a prize bundle of a bike rack, 2 scooters, 2 helmets, 10 bike locks and 20 slap bands.



World Book Day: 5th March 2026

Next week (Thursday) we will mark World Book Day in school with a range of book-related activities in class. Following on from last year, children may wear pyjamas to school and bring along their favourite book and teddy. We hope this will be enjoyable for the children and easier for parents too. We will distribute World Book Day tokens this week.

To combine World Book Day and our Sustrans work we are proposing that on Friday 6th March children partake in an Active Travel book swap, whereby they actively travel to school and bring a used book from home they no longer want to swap with another child in their class. There will be time set aside to read together on that day, as well as on World book day itself.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

If you have any concerns regarding safe-guarding or child protection matters you can speak to Ms McAuley (Designated Teacher), Mrs Bradley or Mrs Turner (Deputy Designated Teachers). Additionally, you may contact or write to Mr Martin McConville (Governor responsible for safe-guarding and CP) or Mr Dale Burnett (Chair of Board of Governors).

TransformED Development Days

We would like to inform you that we have been advised by DENI that schools may schedule **two additional staff training days** to support the implementation of the **TransformED programme**. TransformED focuses on enhancing teaching and learning across the school by providing staff with high-quality professional development and updated strategies to support pupils' progress.

Please note that the school will be **closed to all pupils on Tuesday 31st March and Tuesday 5th May**, normal classes will resume the following day.

Some Dates for your Diary

World Book Day: Thurs 5th March

Science Week: 9th- 13th March

Student Council Mother's Day Event: Fri 13th March

St Patrick's Day "Green Day": Monday 16th March (non-uniform, green themed clothing please).

Sustrans: Big Walk & Wheel: 23rd – 27th March

Integrated Education Week: 23rd – 27th March

Sacraments:

Service of Light and Commitment: Mon 23rd February @ 4pm

First Reconciliation: Mon 16th March @ 11:30am

Confirmation: Friday 20th March @ 11:30am

First Holy Communion: Saturday 23rd May @ 11:30am

P6 Parents Transfer Procedure Information Session: Wed 25th March @ 3pm

School Closure: St Patrick's Day Holiday: Tuesday 17th March

Easter Holidays: School will close at 2/ 3pm on Monday 30th March

School will re-open on Monday 13th April.

P1 Appraisals: 13th – 17th April (consent forms will follow).

Thank you for your continued interest and support.

Yours faithfully,

J McAuley

Principal