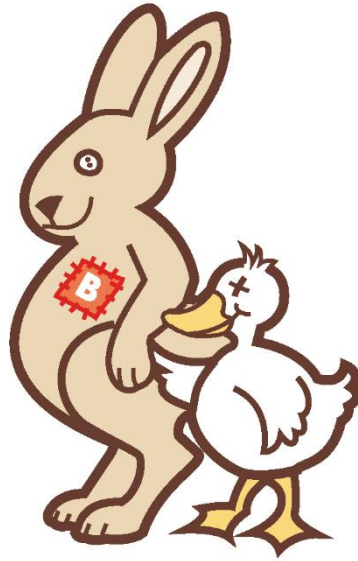


# Ballymoney Nursery School

## 2021-22 Handbook



North Road, Ballymoney BT53 6BW

Tel: 028 2766 4367

Email: [info@ballymoneyns.ballymoney.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@ballymoneyns.ballymoney.ni.sch.uk)

[www.ballymoneynurseryschool.co.uk](http://www.ballymoneynurseryschool.co.uk)

### **Ballymoney Nursery School's Vision and Values**

We work in partnership with our school community to provide a welcoming, nurturing, stimulating and supportive environment where everyone is valued and the children are provided with an excellent foundation for learning.



Happiness Nurturing Inclusion Respect Communication Resilience

Dear Parent/Carer,

As the Principal, can I take this opportunity to welcome you to Ballymoney Nursery School.

Ballymoney Nursery School is an inclusive, nurturing, welcoming, stimulating and supportive environment where everyone is valued and our children are provided with an excellent foundation for learning facilitated by experienced, dedicated staff. Learning experiences in each class are led by qualified teachers and supported by nursery assistants.

The experiences which children have during these early years exert a powerful influence on their long-term development and, more immediately, on their future learning. Through the variety of learning experiences we offer your child, we aim to: -

- ❖ Provide a caring, stimulating, nurturing, inclusive learning environment where children can settle, be positive when learning and all staff encourage them to develop their potential.
- ❖ Be a positive influence in the lives of the children and families we work with through creating a supportive nursery school which feels like home and where everyone feels valued.
- ❖ Ensure each child develops self-control and grows in self-confidence and self-esteem by providing opportunities for success in a wide variety of areas.
- ❖ Ensure each child develops social skills and in doing so develops self-respect and respect for others.
- ❖ Build rapport with our parents and partners to develop a positive partnership which will enable sharing and developing the children's experiences.
- ❖ Create an environment where high quality holistic play experiences are child-led to take account of individual needs and interests and fulfil the pre-school curriculum and provide an excellent foundation for learning.
- ❖ Develop each child's communication skills through contact with each other and the adults in the school and place an emphasis on sharing the world of books, stories, rhymes and music with them.
- ❖ Extend each child's concentration span and depth of understanding through their own natural curiosity and interest.
- ❖ Ensure that children feel safe and secure at nursery school and know what to do if they feel unsafe.

Mrs Muller, Ms McCarron and I are trained teachers with considerable experience both in Nursery Education and Primary Education. I have been a Principal of Primary Schools and Early Years Centres for the past ten years. Our staff of Nursery Assistants are fully qualified and trained to develop your child through a medium of play. We look forward to getting to know you and your child over the coming year and watching your child develop at this particular stage of their life.

Best Wishes



Mrs Jennifer Trimmings,

Principal

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## OUR STAFF TEAM

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<b>Principal:</b>	Mrs J Trimmings, B.Ed. (Hons), PGDip (SQH)
<b>Assistant Teachers:</b>	Mrs S Muller, B.A. (Hons) Ms N McCarron, BA (Hons), PGCE
<b>Nursery Assistants:</b>	Mrs K Simpson, NVQ Level 3 Mrs A Hollis, BTEC Miss D Johnston, BTEC
<b>SEN Assistant:</b>	Miss A McAlonan, NVQ Level 3
<b>Clerical Officer:</b>	Vacancy(pre employment checks currently in process)
<b>Building Supervisor:</b>	Mr N Lamont

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## NURSERY STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION

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**Type of School:** Controlled Nursery School

**Age Range:** 2 - 4 years old

**Numbers:** 104 Part-time session

**Attendance:** 5 days per week



**Part-time session timings:**

**Morning** 9.00-11.00am

**Afternoon** 12.30-2.30pm



Mrs Trimmings is our Principal. She has taught in a variety of positions within the Primary and Nursery sector and after being a Principal of Primary Schools with Early Years Centres in Scotland for 9 years, she joined the Ballymoney Nursery team. As a mother of a pre-schooler and a native of Northern Ireland, she has moved back 'home' so that her daughter can grow up surrounded by family. She is delighted to be working with a wonderful team here at Ballymoney Nursery School who all want to do the best that they can for your children to help give them the best start in their education journey. When she is not working, she enjoys spending quality time with her family.



Mrs Muller is our new Nursery teacher. She has taught in various Nursery schools and classes over the years and is delighted to have returned to Ballymoney Nursery School. When she is not working, Mrs Muller enjoys spending time with her young child.



Ms McCarron is no stranger to Ballymoney, having taught in the Preparatory Department of Dalriada School for fifteen years. Her specialisation is as an Early Years teacher but she has also enjoyed teaching classes at Key Stages 1 and 2. She takes a keen interest in the Arts and loves sharing her creativity with the young pupils in her care. Ms McCarron lives in Articlave where she enjoys walking her dog or horse-riding on the local beaches. She is passionate about the environment and enjoys spending time out in the countryside observing and photographing wildlife.



Mrs Simpson is currently the longest serving member of staff. After working in the Nursery School for some years she returned part-time to the Causeway Institute and gained an NVQ Level 3 qualification. In her spare time, away from nursery school, she is kept busy with her grandchildren and also likes walking and a trip to the shops!



Mrs Hollis joined the staff at Ballymoney Nursery School having previously worked in a local Primary School. In addition to her role as Nursery Assistant, she welcomes and cares for all creatures great and small, visiting the nursery. Away from the classroom, Mrs Hollis has completed a sign language course.



Miss Johnston attended Dalriada School and then gained a BTEC at NRC Ballymoney. During her time at the Nursery School, part of her assigned duties has included working with children with special needs. At home, Miss Johnston is a busy mum to twin boys and a girl.

The pre employment checks for our clerical officer post are currently in process. Further information about the successful candidates will be shared once their appointment has been confirmed.



Mrs McAlonan has worked as a SEN classroom assistant for the past few years. She is an Eco Warrior and enjoys looking after her children and animals at home. Mrs McAlonan has recently achieved her Makaton Level 1.

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## OUR SCHOOL VISION AND VALUES

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The vision, values and aims of Ballymoney Nursery School were created collaboratively with the whole school community during the 2019-20 session and encompass who we as a school community strive to be.

### Our School Vision

We work in partnership with our school community to provide a welcoming, nurturing, stimulating and supportive environment where everyone is valued and our children are provided with an excellent foundation for learning.

### Our School Values

- ❖ Happiness
- ❖ Nurturing
- ❖ Inclusion
- ❖ Respect
- ❖ Communication
- ❖ Resilience



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## OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

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We are an inclusive school where we focus on the well-being and progress of all our children and young people and where all members of our school community are of equal worth.

We recognise, respect and value difference and understand that diversity is a strength that enriches our lives. We take account of differences and strive to remove any barriers to learning and development.

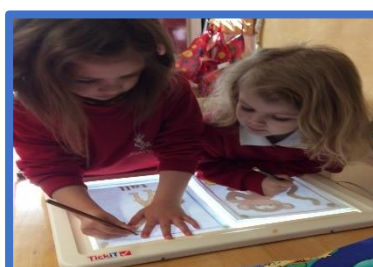
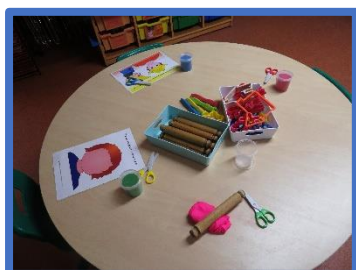
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## LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

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We provide a safe, caring and engaging environment where there is a wealth of appropriate equipment and support by qualified staff to meet the needs of your child. Children are actively involved in their learning through the medium of play. These play experiences are both carefully planned to create a challenging environment where development can take place and also open-ended to enable children to use their imagination.

We have two classrooms and a multipurpose hall area that is shared between the classes. Activities such as music, physical development and circle time take place in the hall area. The hall is also used to facilitate visitors and shows.



We have an extensive outdoor area that all the children have access to including a playground with equipment such as climbing frames and slides and a track for the use of tricycles and scooters to aid the children's physical development. We also have an outdoor classroom, creative room, music wall, mud kitchen and natural exploration area. During 2020-21, we developed an outdoor area specifically for the use of the children in their pre pre-school year.



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## CURRICULUM

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Our curriculum is based on the Northern Ireland Pre School Curricular Guidance which is broad and balanced. Children are allowed to make choices and are provided with opportunities through play and other experiences to develop learning associated with:

- ❖ Personal Social and Emotional Development
  - ❖ Physical Development and Movement
    - ❖ The Arts
    - ❖ Language Development
  - ❖ Early Mathematical Experiences
    - ❖ The World Around Us

Children are given the opportunities to investigate, satisfy their curiosity, explore their environment both indoors and outside, share the world of books, music and drama, experience success and develop a positive attitude towards learning.

Our outdoor area has been developed to ensure the children have an interactive, engaging environment which they can explore. The children are outdoors every day and will therefore need clothes suitable for the weather on these days, in fact every day, as we try to be outside whenever possible. This year we ask that every child leaves a pair of wellies in school which can be used when needed (if you have an outdoor suit that could remain in school that would be great).

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## RECORD KEEPING/ASSESSMENT

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Our staff are constantly observing, recording and evaluating the children as they play. This helps us to plan suitable activities/experiences for them. We always welcome liaison from our parents. We hold parent/teacher meetings twice a year so that parents have the opportunity to discuss their child's progress.

We use the Seesaw app as a way of sharing children's achievements throughout the nursery and what they are taking part in. With parental approval, an account will be set up for each child and parents will be able to see and comment on what they have been doing at Nursery School.

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## POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

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In Ballymoney Nursery School we place a strong emphasis on positive behaviour management. Our aim is to help our children become self-disciplined, accept responsibility for their own actions and respect others and their work. We strive to do this through the implementation of the Golden Rules and working in partnership with our parents/carers.

Initially, we feel it is of the utmost importance that your child feels confident with us and feels accepted. We have to try to understand a child's feelings as he/she struggles with the conflict between the desire to assert themselves and the necessity to conform to the demands placed upon them by the school. We know that for some children this is more of a struggle than for others. Children who behave well, enabling both themselves and others to learn, are acknowledged and have their positive behaviour recognised and rewarded.

The children are introduced to and agree the boundaries when they are settling in. These ensure their right to uninterrupted learning through play, their safety, the safety of others and the smooth running of the school. The policy of our school is to try to help the children understand how through not keeping the agreed "Golden Rules", their actions negatively affect others and themselves.

If children display continual anti-social behaviour, we ask you to co-operate with us so that a behaviour management programme can be worked out as it is vitally important that both home and school have the same expectations about what is appropriate and acceptable behaviour.

If you are concerned about any aspect of your child's behaviour or if you feel the behaviour of another child is affecting your child in any way please do let us know.



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## CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

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As an inclusive school, children with special educational needs are admitted to the Nursery School in every possible circumstance. Whilst provision for the pupil is co-ordinated by the Special Education Needs Co-ordinator, all members of staff are involved in providing the support to integrate the child as fully as possible, giving them access to the same materials, activities and experiences as the other children in the class. With parental permission, we also work in conjunction with outside agencies in order to provide the most effective way to make their nursery experience rich and fulfilling while meeting their needs.

A sensory room is being created in both of the classrooms. This will be an area where children can work on a one to one basis with a member of staff or somewhere to go to help them self-regulate when required. It will also be an area to engage children's senses.

If you have a child who has additional needs, please get in touch with us so that we can discuss your child's needs and the agencies currently involved with them.

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## SAFEGUARDING AND PASTORAL CARE

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We have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the children in our care. We have a comprehensive Safeguarding policy and Intimate Care policy in place which are available to read on our school website. Our Safeguarding team is made up of Mrs Trimmings (Principal), Mrs Muller (class teacher) and one of our Governors, Mrs Martin.

All the staff and volunteers have been subject to appropriate background checks (Access NI) and guidelines have been drawn up to guide their behaviour with the children. It may be necessary for the staff to change your child's clothes if they have had a toileting accident but this will not be done without your permission, which we request at the beginning of the year. In line with current advice from the Education Authority, staff wear PPE (gloves, apron, mask and visor) when involved in intimate care with a child. These will be shown to all of the children on their first day of nursery school so that they are aware of them.

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## SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURE

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If you have a concern about your own or another child you should follow these procedures:

I have a concern about my/a child's safety I can talk to the class teacher



If I am still concerned, I can talk to the Principal, Mrs J. Trimmings (Designated teacher for Child Protection)



If I am still concerned, I can talk/write to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors by contacting the school for contact numbers



And if I am still unhappy, I can contact: Gateway Single Point of Entry Team on 0300 1234 333

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## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

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If you have a complaint you should follow these procedures:

I have a complaint, I can talk to the class teacher



If I am not happy with the response, I can talk to the Principal, Mrs J. Trimmings



If I am still not happy, I can write to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors by contacting the school for contact numbers



And if I am still unhappy, I can contact: Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO)  
[www.nipso.org.uk](http://www.nipso.org.uk)

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## HEALTH AND SAFETY

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The health and safety of your child is of utmost importance and we make every effort to maintain a safe, clean and healthy environment for the children. You can help us by ensuring that the following rules are observed:

### **Covid-19**

If your child or anyone in your house is showing any signs of Covid-19, please ensure your child does not attend school for 14 days. The following main symptoms to look for are: -

- new continuous cough and/or
- high temperature
- loss of taste or smell

If your child develops any of these symptoms whilst at Nursery School, you will be contacted and they will be taken to the staff room to wait to be picked up. The member of staff who will remain

with the child will be wearing PPE. If they need to use the toilet, your child will use the staff toilet which will be cleaned down afterwards.

Upon arriving at school each day, their teacher will take their temperature using a non-contact thermometer. This will be introduced to them on their induction day. This is a safety measure which helps to protect everyone if anyone was to have a high temperature.

### **Biting/Spitting**

The safety of all our children and staff is paramount and due to the risk of Covid-19 our ways of working have had to change within the nursery. If any child is involved in spitting or biting, they will be spoken to by the class teacher and their parent will be informed. We would ask that the parent reinforces the message at home that we cannot bite or spit at people. Unfortunately, if there was to be another incident of spitting or biting the child in question will be asked to remain at home for a period of time until they understand that they can not spit at or bite other people. This is to ensure the safety of the other children and adults in the room.

### **Illness**

Make sure your child is not sent to school if they show any sign of illness. A child should be kept at home until he/she is capable of joining in all activities including outdoor play. Nursery School can be a very upsetting place if you feel under the weather.

If a child has a tummy upset, Public Health Agency guidance states that they should not return to school for 48 hours after the symptoms have disappeared. Remember there are many others in the class and life in the Nursery School is very intimate so bugs are easily spread.

Staff will encourage your child to become independent in toileting and dressing during their time at the Nursery School. This will reduce the need for personal contact. If you would like to talk about your child's individual needs please speak to a member of staff. Do encourage your child to be independent at toileting and to wash their hands afterwards. Young children are constantly touching materials and each other during play and germs are easily passed on.

### **Medical Issues**

It is very important that the Nursery staff are aware of any medical problems that your child may have and these are treated confidentially. If your child suffers from asthma, please inform staff of any activities which may trigger an attack. Inhalers may only be administered to pupils by staff after arrangements have been made and the appropriate paperwork has been completed. Should you have any concerns about medical issues, please speak with nursery staff.

### **Nut free school**

Please note that **under no circumstances should there be any nut products** brought into school, whether these are in a school bag or jacket etc. We want to ensure that all our staff and children are safe at nursery especially when there are known allergies therefore there **can be no nuts on the premises.**

## **Accidents**

All our staff are paediatric first aid trained. We will always inform parents about any minor accidents when children are collected and we will telephone immediately if it is a major accident.

## **Smoke free Zone**

Ballymoney Nursery School is a smoke free zone in accordance with DE policy. All parents and visitors to the school should refrain from smoking in the building and along the walkway into the Nursery School and car park. We appreciate your co-operation in this matter.

## **Personal Protective Equipment**

As well as risk assessing the nursery for children coming back, risk assessments are also in place for staff coming back to work. In line with advice from the Education Authority, staff will be wearing PPE (gloves, apron, mask and visor) when involved in intimate care with a child such as nappy changing. These will be shown to all of the children on their first day of nursery so that they are aware of them

## **Fire Drills**

Fire procedure notices are displayed throughout the Nursery School. There will be termly morning and afternoon fire drills. The first of these drills will be 'announced'. That means that it will be explained to the children what will happen and what they are to do. The rest are 'unannounced' with the children and staff actively encouraged to evacuate the building as quickly and calmly as possible.

## **Cleaning Procedures**

To ensure that all of our bubbles/classes are protected from each other, all of the areas within the school that are used by each class have been timetabled to ensure that there is only one class using them at a time and to provide adequate time for cleaning between usage. All of the resources that are used by the children in the morning sessions are changed for the children in the afternoon sessions. Between the morning and afternoon session all of the surfaces, toilets, sinks etc will be thoroughly cleaned and all of the snack items such as cups, plates etc will be sterilised. A record is kept of all of the areas that have been cleaned and when they have been cleaned.

## **Emergency Closure Procedures/Safety**

In the event of an emergency during the school day where the children and staff are unable to re-enter the school building, the children will be taken to Ballymoney Model Integrated Primary School and may be collected by parents and carers from there. Please be reassured that your child's safety and well-being is our prime concern.

Children must always be brought to school and settled with the teacher at the beginning of each session. On no account may they be left at the gate or the door.

Make sure that your child remains with you after he/she has been collected from class. Children can easily slip out of the door by themselves and wander off in the confusion of home time as parents stop to chat.

If someone different is collecting your child please let us know. We are unable to hand a child over to someone we do not know even if the child knows them.

Please make sure all cars are parked on North Road outside the zig zag lines with consideration for other road users. Only staff cars and delivery vehicles are allowed on school premises. This is to ensure the safety of your children and the children at the Primary School. It also makes it easier to monitor those on the school premises and draw attention to strangers.

## **ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS**

After places to the Nursery School have been offered, parents are invited to an Induction evening in May/June where details of the Nursery Curriculum are given along with practical advice about commencing Nursery School. Induction sessions are arranged where parents can bring their children to sample the Nursery environment, meet other parents and children who will be attending the same session and become familiar with the Nursery setting.

Due to the current pandemic we have changed the 'usual' format of our induction for the 2021-22 year. At the moment, the current plan is to invite your child to attend a small group short induction session at the beginning of the new school year at the end of August 2021.

**Induction dates:** - 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> August

When you received your letter offering your child a place at Ballymoney Nursery School, there was a link to a Google Form included on it. Please complete this as it provides us with some important and personal information about your child to help us prepare for them starting at Ballymoney Nursery School. In June, you will be sent a note of your child's induction date and time along with their start date. The envelope will also include permission forms and an 'All About Me' booklet to complete. It is essential that these are completed and returned as soon as possible by post or on your child's induction day.

**Starting dates:** - Cohort 1 - Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021, Cohort 2 - Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2021, Cohort 3 - Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2021, Cohort 4 - Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2021 and Cohort 5 - Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2021

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## **SETTLING NEW CHILDREN**

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We try to make the move from home to Nursery School as smooth and trouble-free as possible for you and your child.

From the beginning of the first term, the children are admitted on a staggered basis each week in order to establish a good relationship with each child and to ensure that each child has settled reasonably well before any other children are received.

This year, this means that your child may not start school until the end of September so please be patient and understand that we have the interests of your child at heart.

Your **child's first day will only last one hour**, either from **9.30 am - 10.30 am**, if he/she is in the morning session, or **1.00 pm - 2.00 pm** if he/she is in the afternoon session. However, if your child is not ready to stay independently for an hour on the first day, it is best you leave

together after a short period. When you bring your child along on the appointed day, please arrange to have any younger children left at home. It is important that you share this day with your child. Time in the Nursery School will be built up depending on how well your child settles. Due to the current situation with Covid-19, once your child has arrived at the classroom and met their teacher, you should then leave the school. We appreciate that this is a time you want to share with them as they settle into the room however we are trying to reduce the number of adults within a confined space and to adhere to 2 metre distance where possible. On this occasion, if your child is very insecure, you are welcome to wait in the school reception whilst wearing a face covering.

Children are admitted on a Tuesday in order to give those who have started the previous week the Monday to settle in again without disruption. This also shortens the first week for them.

If your child has settled, they will attend for the two hours (9-11.00am) and (12.30-2.30pm) from their second day onwards.

If your child is in their penultimate/pre pre-school year they will attend for one hour for their first two weeks and if they have settled, their time will then be increased.

Our aim is to bridge the gap between home and school. This should never be hurried and parents should always do as the Nursery Teacher asks during this period.

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## SCHOOL UNIFORM/SUITABLE CLOTHING

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We have a school uniform that children can choose to wear if they wish to. We have a school polo shirt in yellow/white (£8.50), a red sweatshirt (£10) and a waterproof reversible fleece coat (£20) which are available to purchase directly from the school.



In order that the children can become independent and enjoy all the activities in school and also to reduce the need for physical contact from others, it is essential that they wear clothes that are easily washable and those they can manage by themselves when they go to the toilet. The easiest garments are trousers with elasticized waists, leggings, jogging bottoms and upper garments with sleeves that roll up easily. Please try to avoid garments with buttons and belts.

There are many pieces of climbing equipment both indoors and outside so children must have suitable footwear in order to avoid accidents. Trainers or shoes with Velcro fastenings or buckles are the most suitable.

### Labelling

All uniform should be clearly labelled so as to avoid confusion or children going home with a wrong piece of clothing.

### Change of clothes

We ask that everyone provides a change of clothes for your child in case of accidents. There is a drawstring bag in school for each child where their change of clothes will be stored. We ask that on their first day of Nursery school you place the items (underwear, socks, t-shirt and bottoms) in a plastic bag and write your child's name on it. These will then be transferred into the drawstring bag which will be only used on your child.

### Outdoors

We have a wonderful outdoor area which the children access. Therefore, if possible please leave a pair of wellingtons in school for your child to wear and ensure they come appropriately dressed for the weather e.g. coat, hat, scarf, sun hat etc. On sunny days, the school's policy is for you to apply sun cream to your child before they attend nursery and to bring a sun hat with them. Please ensure they have coats for rainy days.

### Tissues

It would be appreciated if each parent would bring along a box of tissues on your child's first day. We go through lots as you can imagine but we find this keeps us blowing for the whole year!!

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## WHAT YOUR CHILD SHOULD NOT BRING TO SCHOOL

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We ask that your child **does not** bring toys from home, in particular now due to Covid-19. We also ask that no school bags are brought to school. Some children may need a special toy for reassurance when they are beginning school however, we ask these remain in their coat pocket which will be on their coat pegs as they will not be brought into the classroom. We also ask that all items of jewellery are left at home as these can also be easily lost and can also hinder a good hand washing routine.

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## COMING AND GOING

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We are in school from 8.30 am in the morning in order to set the room up for the children. The doors will not be open until the specific times the classes are to arrive as the staff are involved in preparation and planning and are not available to supervise children. We would ask that children attending the morning session are collected promptly to enable the rooms to be cleaned and staff to have their lunches before the afternoon sessions. **On your child's first day a maximum of two adults can accompany your child for this milestone occasion. However, after this day in**

**order to maintain social distancing only one adult can accompany their child to nursery school and pick them up.** Anyone picking up your child must be 16 years old or over.

Please do not bring children to school too early or congregate at entrance gates or doors and stop to have conversations with other parents as we want to minimise the number of people in one area at any given time.

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## HEALTHY SNACK/SCHOOL FUND

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In Ballymoney Nursery School we are committed to promoting healthy eating and feel it is imperative to maximise every opportunity to influence the children's eating habits. Appropriate healthy foods are available to the children along with the option of milk or water. For the foreseeable future, instead of children accessing and serving themselves independently, staff will be serving them. There is also a water dispenser in each room which the children can access independently at any time throughout the sessions.

As the nursery school is part of the Department of Education for Northern Ireland/Education Authority, the overall service provided is free. However, we do ask for a voluntary contribution of £40.00 per term for School Funds. If you wish, the full amount of £120.00 may be paid at the beginning of the school year or can be paid in instalments of £20 each half term. This money is used to provide daily snacks for the children to have with their milk, baking activities, parties, visiting entertainers (this will take place when it is safe to do so), treats for the children and any outings we go on as well as extra resources.

Due to the pandemic we want to reduce the amount of actual cash handling within the school. Therefore, our preferred method of payment is now via direct payment into our school bank account. Our bank details are as follows: -

**Account name: Ballymoney Nursery School School Fund**

**Danske Bank Account No: 91100769**

**Sort Code: 95-02-37**

**Please indicate your child's name when completing this transfer.**

If you are unable to pay direct into our bank account, please either bring a cheque made payable to '**Ballymoney Nursery School**' or the correct money where possible into school in an envelope with your child's name on it and what it is for.

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## BIRTHDAYS

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Birthdays are celebrated within the Nursery School. Most children love to bring a cake into school for sharing on their birthday. If you would like to do this, please ensure it is a **shop bought cake in unopened packaging and be nut free and not be labelled with 'may contain traces of**



**nuts'**. Please inform a member of staff the day before you intend to bring the cake so that we can plan our snack accordingly. The unopened box will be cleaned with anti bacterial wipes before being opened. If you do not wish your child to have any cake that is brought in by another pupil, please let us know at the beginning of the year.

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## PHOTOGRAPHER

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The school photographer visits the school each year. Parents will be kept fully informed of the date for this.

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## PARENTAL PARTNERSHIP

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*"Parents/guardians/carers are the child's first and continuing educator and as such have a central role to play in pre-school life."*

(Pre School Curricular Guidance, DENI,2018)

We work in close partnership with parents/carers of all our children. Throughout the year, parents have many informal opportunities to discuss their children's progress and two formal meetings are arranged each year. Informal opportunities to share in their children's learning are also provided through Stay and Play sessions which enable you to come to Nursery School and join in the activities with your child. At the moment due to current restrictions, we are unsure what these will look like in the 2021-22 session but we will endeavour to try and host something similar when it is safe to do so. You will also be invited to Nursery School to share in your child's Christmas performance and their end of Nursery Graduation ceremony. When guidance prohibits visitors such as parents/carers to be invited to such events, they will be recorded and shared on Seesaw.



We have an extensive home learning programme. We participate in the Getting Ready to Learn Programme which includes the Big Bedtime Read, Happy Healthy Kids and Education Works. These programmes help support the link with home and offer ideas and activities to be doing at home to help further support each child's development. We also provide monthly home learning sheets which include ideas and activities that can be carried out at home to reinforce the children's learning.



Information about the activities children are involved in during the time they are in the Nursery School will be shared in our monthly newsletters, school website and on the private Facebook page which is only accessible by current parents/carers, staff and the Board of Governors.

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## LINKS WITH PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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Throughout the year as part of the transition procedure we endeavour to visit some of the local primary schools and where practical, invite Year 1 teachers to visit us in the Nursery School. During the month of June, Year 1 teachers from the local Primary Schools come along to meet the children in Nursery School.

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## LINKS WITH THE COMMUNITY

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We have developed links with our local community through visits to the police station, fire station and the local library or by having visits from nurses, hairdressers and the dentist to name but a few. In addition to this we take the children on local walks and outings in order to extend the work being carried out in the classroom. These will take place if safe to do so and in line with DE and PHA guidance.

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## HOW YOU CAN HELP YOUR CHILD TRANSITION TO NURSERY SCHOOL

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- Read and discuss our children's handbook with your child. Talk about the staff in their room and the different areas of the Nursery (these will be issued in June).
- Using a visual on a calendar to countdown to the first day of nursery.
- Ideas to prepare your child:
  - Read stories about starting nursery
  - Talk about your own positive experiences of school
  - Exposure to the school, walking past, pointing out children in uniform
  - Involve your child in shopping for school items
  - Ask your child how they feel; if appropriate, reassure as necessary
- Support the child to be as independent as possible:
  - Dressing/undressing
  - Fastenings
  - Toileting
  - Using a tissue
  - Tidying
  -

- Teach positive behaviour:
  - Have clear rules
  - Have a routine
  - What is right/wrong
  - Pay attention to positive behaviour rather than negative behaviour
  - Remain as positive as possible
  - Explain consequences of poor choices
  
- Encourage learning through:
  - Play: provide different activities e.g. arts & craft, puzzles etc. →
  - Talking: talk about games, stories, while out and about, describe what you are doing
  - Listening: have quiet time, encourage looking while listening
  - Reading: read bedtime stories, show own name, go to library, point out words/signs in environment
  - Writing: fine motor skill activities e.g. playdough, paint, colour, draw
  - Numeracy: sing number rhymes, count in environment e.g. going up stairs, sorting items, point out numbers/shapes in environment, talk about size, position & time
  
- Arrange play dates (whilst adhering to NI Executive restrictions) with children attending the same nursery.
  
- You do not need to do everything with your child, choose what is manageable for you as a family and for the child.

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## HOW YOU CAN HELP US

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- ✓ Read and discuss the children's handbook with your child as this will help reassure them before they come to their induction session (this is issued in June).
- ✓ Complete the Google Form to give you an insight into your child before they start Nursery School (attached to the email with your welcome letter sent in April).
- ✓ Ensure that the forms issued in June are completed and that you list emergency contacts.
- ✓ Sign up to the School Messaging App which enables us to contact you directly and share information with you via email or text.
- ✓ Consent to your child having a Seesaw account created in order to share their learning and communicate with the teacher.
- ✓ Clearly name your child's spare clothes as well as the clothes they were to nursery such as cardigans, jumpers, coats and wellies.
- ✓ Keep us up to date with any changes to address or telephone number.
- ✓ Inform school immediately when an emergency contact number changes.
- ✓ Inform Nursery staff if your child is being collected by another adult.

- ✓ Let the school know if your child may be upset by something which has happened at home e.g. death of a pet or illness of a family member.
- ✓ Participate in any parent partnership events we may be able to organise.
- ✓ Encourage your child to talk about their experiences at the Nursery School.
- ✓ Encourage your child to move carefully within the school, to use toilets properly and to respect other people and their belongings.
- ✓ Please come forward to volunteer when help is required for outings, parties, etc (when we are permitted to seek volunteers again).
- ✓ Do not park in the school car park as there is limited space and it is a major safety issue for our children.
- ✓ Watch the school induction video when it is issued with your child and discuss it.
- ✓ Most importantly - Enjoy your child's time at the Nursery!

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## DATES NURSERY IS CLOSED TO PUPILS 2021-22

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Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2021 - Friday 29<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> December 2021 (School closes at 12 noon)

Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2021 - Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2022

Monday 14<sup>th</sup>-Monday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2022

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2022

Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2022 (School closes at 12 noon)

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> - Monday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2022

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2022

Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> - Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2022

Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022- Last day of term/School closes at 12 noon

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## AND FINALLY...

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Starting school will be a happy time if we all work together. Our priority is to ensure the safety of your child as well as their wellbeing and development. Remember you are placing your child into the trust of qualified teachers who are always willing to discuss any issues in a confidential manner and at an appropriate time. If you have any worries at all about your child in the Nursery School,

please contact the school to discuss them. Working together, we can usually sort things out very quickly.

The Nursery School has always had an 'Open Door' policy which means parents are welcome to visit. At the present time, our open door is having to remain closed for now. However, we are still 'open' for parents who wish to talk to us. Please feel free to telephone, email or arrange a time to meet with your child's teacher where we can ensure social distancing.

Make sure you and your child make the best of this opportunity to attend Ballymoney Nursery School. Working together we can strive to provide the best quality education for your child.

Many thanks for taking the time to read our booklet. I don't doubt there may be things that will change over the coming months due to Government guidance and I ask you for your understanding as we work together to provide your child with the best start to their preschool education.

*PLEASE NOTE: - The information in this handbook is correct at the time of printing and there could be changes affecting any of the matters dealt within it, either before your child's placement begins or during the course of their placement. The Principal will ensure that any important changes of information are made available to you.*