

**BALLYLIFFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL**

142 Ballinderry Bridge Road

Cookstown

Co Tyrone

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PRINCIPAL: Mr Ciaran McElroy**Tel / Fax:** 028 79418388**Email:** info@ballylifford.cookstown.ni.sch.uk**Website:** www.ballyliffordps.com**Twitter:** @BallyliffordPSFriday 7th August 2020

Dear Parents / Carers,

Thank you for your continued patience regarding plans for this academic year 2020-2021.

Following the latest guidance from the Department of Education (Thursday 6th August) allowing all schools to return fully from September, please find below additional information you will need for your child/children returning to school outlining the structures and arrangements that we will be putting into place for the safe return of both our pupils and staff. We also want to provide clarity on start dates and details on school duration.

The arrangements have been discussed and approved by the Board of Governors and follow all the latest guidance to schools. I assure you that in making our arrangements, key considerations were and remain hygiene, safety, health and well-being of the whole school community. The Board of Governors have been actively considering all options as to how they can open the school safely for both pupils and staff.

Whilst we aim to follow the plan explained below as we reopen our school, it is important to highlight this may be subject to change depending on the Department of Education issuing further guidance.

As the Covid-19 virus is still present and continues to have other implications on our everyday lives, it is important that we retain a degree of flexibility within our planning so that we can deal with any issues that may arise as we return to school.

EDUCATION RESTART - KEY DATES

Week beginning Monday 24th August 2020, P7 pupils will return to school from 9:00 am to 12:00noon each day. P2-P7 pupils will return to school the same week in a phased approach. Please refer to table below for times and dates week beginning Monday 24th August 2020 **ONLY**.

DATE	YEAR GROUPS	TIME
Monday 24 th August	P7 ONLY	9am-12noon
Tuesday 25 th August	P1, P3, P5 and P7	9am-12noon
Wednesday 26 th August	P2, P4, P6 and P7	9am-12noon
Thursday 27 th August	P7 ONLY	9am-12noon
Friday 28 th August	ALL Year groups	9am-12noon

Please note we are closed on Monday 31st August for the Bank Holiday

SCHOOL ARRIVAL TIMES

- School will be open from 8:45am each day.
- Pupils may arrive at school between 8:45am - 9:05am.
- Upon arrival, pupils must walk directly to their classroom where Teachers/Assistants will be present to greet the pupils as they arrive.
- Before entering the classroom, pupils must use the hand wash/ hand sanitiser provided.
- Parents/Visitors are **not** permitted to enter the school building under any circumstances.

SCHOOL COLLECTION TIMES

From **Tuesday 1st September**, school finishing times will be as follows.

P1	Week One -12noon Week Two -1:00pm Week Three – 2:00pm
P2	2:00pm
P3 – P4	2:55pm
P5 – P7	3:00pm

- All children will be brought to the main playground by their class teacher at the end of the school day regardless of the weather.
- They will remain in their class groups and collected as normal as they see parents/carers arrive
- There will be **NO** parking allowed in the staff car park at school collection times.

SCHOOL BREAK/LUNCH TIMES

- Whilst in school, all pupils will remain in a membership 'bubble' with their own class.
- Each class will eat their healthy break in the classroom, however and have their own period of outside play in a designated area of the playground during breaktime.
- It is essential that coats are brought to school by pupils every day. Pupils will be brought outside during breaktime, irrespective of the weather, to allow time away from the classroom. (Except in extreme circumstances).
- Pupils will follow a similar routine at lunchtime whereby they will now eat their lunch in the classroom, followed by a period of play outside in a designated area of the playground with their own class.
- Pupils' healthy break and those taking packed lunch should bring their items of food in disposable wrapping or in a washable/wipeable container.
- All children need their own water bottle which will come into school every day. This bottle should be clearly labelled and thoroughly cleaned daily. Children will not be able to refill their bottles throughout the day.

SCHOOL UNIFORM

- Pupils will be required to wear full school uniform upon our return to school. Children are required to wear school uniform as usual and encouraged to change when they go home each day. We would encourage clean uniforms as often as possible.
- Cloakroom areas of school will be closed to pupils, so coats will be hung over the children's chairs.
- The PE curriculum will be delivered outside on dry days throughout the week. Children can wear their school PE clothing/half zips and school jerseys to school on these days and also on Fridays.

EQUIPMENT AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS

- Initially pupils will not be permitted to bring school bags, toys or any other items to school.
- All children should bring a pencil case with pencils, crayons/colouring pencils, rubber and a sharpener.
- Please ensure it all fits in the pencil case. It will remain in school and will be used only by them. We would encourage you to have a second well stocked pencil case at home for completing homework tasks

SCHOOL MEALS & TRANSPORT

- At present we are yet to receive definitive information regarding school meals and transport
- School meals will resume on Tuesday 1st September 2020.
- Meals will be brought to the pupils to eat in their classroom.
- The free school meals payment system will continue until the end of August 2020.
- For those taking packed lunch, pupils should bring their items of food in disposable wrapping or in a washable/wipeable container/lunchbox which are cleaned daily.
- Dinners continue to be paid for on a weekly basis. We ask children to have the correct change labelled in clingfilm/clear bag.

HOMEWORK

- All main items of homework will be shared with the pupils online via the learning platform 'Seesaw'.
- There will be no homework for the first few weeks until we make arrangements as to how this can be done safely and to allow pupils and parents time to access 'Seesaw' and familiarise themselves with the platform.
- Information on how to access and use 'Seesaw' has been shared with parents. We would ask all parents to sign up and complete registration following the information sheet previously issued.

SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

- It is important that school has the most up to date contact information for all our pupils and parents. You will be asked to complete a data capture information form which we will issue electronically to update our records accordingly.
- All communication with parents will be carried out via our school website, Schools NI app and our school Twitter account. We ask that all parents download and update the Schools NI app settings by sending test notification and restarting notifications on your mobile device in order to receive messages and updates from our messaging system.

HEALTH AND SAFETY / COVID-19 PREVENTATION / PERSONAL HYGIENE

We consider the Health and Safety of our pupils, staff and wider school community to be of utmost importance. In line with Government suggestions, we have put the following measures in place.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

- throughout the school building there will be signage to remind pupils, staff and parents of social distance requirements and hygiene practices to be used in school.
- *It is important to remind parents/carers they cannot congregate at entrance or exit gates/doors.*

PROTECTIVE BUBBLES

- With consistent class membership - limiting contact between groups of children is the main risk mitigation measure for children attending school. These groups will not interact with other groups within the school.

LIMITING VISITORS

- For everyone's safety, Parents and members of the public WILL NOT be allowed to enter into the school building unless in exceptional circumstances or by prior arrangement. Prior authorisation must be agreed by the Principal and it should be conducted safely, observing social distancing. This is of vital importance to protect and ensure the health, safety and well-being of everyone in our school and wider school community.
- If you need to speak to class teachers, we ask that you do so by telephone. We ask for your full co-operation with this requirement and please understand this is for the safety of all.
- We would like to make parents aware that if their child needs to be accompanied to school, only **one** parent should attend.

SANITISING STATIONS

- Sanitisers will be placed at the main entrance and exit doors. Children will be encouraged to use the hand sanitiser as well as full hand washing throughout the day
- We would also encourage children to bring their own individual sanitiser which will remain in school.

REGULAR HANDWASHING

- Promotion of regular and thorough attention to hygiene through regular hand washing and good respiratory hygiene, following the "Catch it, Bin it, Kill it" approach.
- Children will be requested by staff to wash their hands regularly throughout the school day.
- Children will wash their hands when they enter the classroom and will continue to wash their hands throughout the day e.g. before eating their break, when returning from outside after break, before eating their dinner, when returning from outside after dinner, before and after P.E, when requested to do so and before leaving at the end of the school day.
- It is essential that all children are reminded of the significance of personal hygiene as they return to school, particularly around the importance of regular handwashing. We encourage you to continue practising with your children the washing of hands for at least 20 seconds using liquid soap and water and drying them thoroughly.

INDIVIDUAL LEARNING PACKS

- Children will only use their own personal equipment such as pencils and colouring pens/crayons. Parents will be asked to supply these at the start of the year and they will be remain in school.

STAFF PPE

- School staff may wear PPE (such as visors, aprons or gloves) if they are required to work in close proximity with a child or to perform first aid if required.

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

- If your child is displaying any of the symptoms of COVID-19, they should stay at home and follow the latest Public Health advice. (Symptoms include: raised temperature, persistent cough, loss of taste and loss of smell)
- If any child presents as unwell, the school has a non-contact thermometer which may be used. The child will be brought to an individual room while medical advice is sought, and parents/guardians contacted.
- If there is a confirmed case of someone in the school having the Covid-19 Virus, the school will follow the Department of Health's 'Test, trace and Protect' strategy. Therefore, the name and contact details of everyone who enters the school building will be recorded, including school staff, pupils, parents and visitors.

HOME/SCHOOL COVID-19 AGREEMENT


From the Minister for Education - Peter Weir:

The successful return to school not only requires school leaders to deploy effective measures to manage risk but the continued support of parents, pupils and wider society to be vigilant and act responsibly within the overarching public health guidelines. To support this, schools will be provided with a template letter that can be issued to parents highlighting the importance of adherence to the public health guidance. This is supported by the Practitioners' Group and will ensure consistency in messaging across schools. The Education Restart Programme will also develop a short leaflet that can be issued to parents via their schools reminding them that they must not send their child(ren) to school if they have any COVID-19 symptoms.

We know that this is a lot of information and it is frustrating living at such a time of uncertainty where guidance is rapidly evolving. There will be many changes to our school life, with our priority remaining the health, safety and well-being of all pupils, staff and school community. We are following the guidance and doing what we can to keep everyone safe and minimise the risks that we have identified. This will only be successful if we all play our part. We hope that these changes, whilst necessary, will still allow our pupils to have an enjoyable experience upon their return to school.

All arrangements will be kept under review and any changes will be communicated to you as and when appropriate and/or necessary. We would like to thank you for your understanding, patience and continued support at this time. We look forward to welcoming all our pupils back to school.

Yours sincerely



Mr Ciaran McElroy
Principal