

# School Prospectus



*“Nurturing Potential,  
Achieving Together”*



**Dear Parents,**

**Welcome to Ballylifford Primary School – a caring community focussed on children and committed to their individual good. Thank you for taking the time to look through our prospectus which I am sure will provide you with lots of information about our school.**

**Our overriding aim is to help children develop into mature, responsible young men and women who have a feeling of self-worth and importance. To do this it is essential that we work in partnership with parents and the wider community. Indeed, the success of our school depends on good relationships between staff, pupils, parents and our school community.**

**This prospectus outlines what we stand for and what we can offer your child at Ballylifford Primary School. It provides you with information about our school and an insight into our policies and practices. Of course no booklet can convey the real atmosphere of a school and should you have any other questions or concerns please do not hesitate to visit the school and we would be delighted to show you and your child around.**

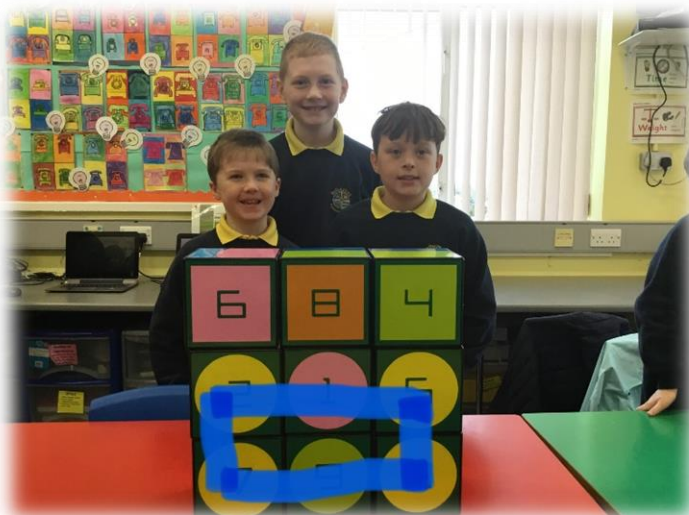
**Yours sincerely,**

**Mr Ciaran McElroy**

**Principal**

# Mission Statement

**Ballylifford PS is a Catholic co-educational school seeking to promote a caring ethos throughout the school community. We aim to serve the families of our community by providing an education of the highest quality and delivering a curriculum for the development of the whole child in a happy, caring and safe environment reflecting the highest standards of pastoral care. In achieving this we recognise that each child is a valued and unique member of God's community.**



# **Our Aims**

- **To reflect the religious ethos of our community and ensure that each child feels a valued and special member of the school community.**
- **To promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of our pupils.**
- **To provide a broad and balanced curriculum appropriate to the needs of each pupil at his/her stage of development which reflect our high expectations and culture of achievement.**
- **To create a love of learning, a knowledge of how to learn and the motivation to produce his/her best work.**
- **To foster an environment in which this learning and development may take place.**
- **To develop an attitude which leads to self-discipline, independence, courtesy, good manners and respect for everyone.**
- **To provide opportunities for pupils to achieve success in a variety of contexts, promoting positive self-esteem.**
- **To develop a knowledge and understanding of their own environment and of the wider world in which we live.**
- **To foster and develop close relationships between home, school and the community.**

# Our School Values & Motto

Ballylifford Primary School is a safe and caring community led school in which all children will grow and succeed and our school values and motto represent this in a positive way that are meaningful to Ballylifford Primary School. They have a purpose and are displayed by pupils and staff on daily basis both in the school environment and outside in the community. They are easily discernible and reflect the overall ethos and aspirations of the school community.

Through consultation, Ballylifford PS stakeholders identified six core values which reflected the ethos and aspirations of their school community

## 'We Learn'

Our School Values are:

Welcome  
Learn  
Empathy  
Achievement  
Respect  
Nurture

We encourage our whole school community to embrace our motto along with our values to help shape future choices in everything we do.

## 'Nurturing Potential, Achieving Together'



# Background and Ethos

**Ballylifford Primary School is a co-educational Catholic Maintained school for 4-11 year olds. It is in a beautiful rural setting overlooking Lough Neagh and right beside St. Patrick's Church in the Parish of Ballinderry.**

**Ballylifford PS is a caring school where the whole school community shares a common goal – to do the best for all children in its care. As a Catholic School, our overriding aim is to establish and foster Christian values for life: to do this, it is essential that we develop this partnership with parents and 'Friends of Ballylifford' PTA is testimony to this commitment.**

**Being a small, rural school, all members of staff get to know each and every child on an individual basis. There is a family feel to all we do. A particular strength of our school is the small class size with an extremely favourable pupil-teacher ratio. As a result, more time and attention is available to support each child's learning and individual needs. Our highly trained classroom assistants support this level of attention even further.**



**In our school, children are grouped according to their ability and needs within each class. Our composite classes support this differentiation even further. Within our mixed age classes, children are grouped in such a way to ensure they have an appropriate amount of challenge or support.**

**For example, if a child needs to be challenged, he/she can work with children from a different year/higher ability group. Alternatively, children who need further reinforcement can work with children from a medium or lower ability group or even children from the year group below. In this way, all the needs of our children are catered for fully.**





# **Accommodation and Resources**

**Originally built in 1910, the school has very good facilities. These include a newly extended P.E. Sports Hall, three bright classrooms, mobile classroom which is used as an additional learning area and for after schools club.**

**Each classroom has an interactive whiteboard to support teaching and learning. The grounds include two separate all weather areas, two grass areas and an outdoor garden area.**



# **Admissions**

**On selecting children for admission to the school, the Board of Governors will apply the criteria as set out by the school in the Education Authority Handbook; copies of which are available from the school office and on the Education Authority website. Enrolment and Admission numbers are 93 and 13 respectively.**



# **Delivering the Curriculum**

**It is the policy of Ballylifford Primary School that all pupils will receive their full entitlement under the Northern Ireland Curriculum, and so the school offers a broad and balanced curriculum. The curriculum is divided into the following Areas of Learning.**

- **Language & Literacy,**
- **Mathematics and Numeracy,**
- **The Arts (Art & Design, Drama and Music),**
- **The World Around Us (Geography, History, Science and Technology)**
- **Personal Development and Mutual Understanding**
- **Physical Education**
- **Religious Education**

**When planning our curriculum, we take into account the uniqueness of each child and his/her individual needs through differentiation. We want to ensure we have a skills based approach that is grounded in practical experiences and is task led. The World Around Us themes also allow the children to make cross-curricular links within their learning.**

**Through effective delivery of the curriculum competences, we aim to enhance the pupils' Cross Curricular Skills and Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities (TSPC) in the following key areas.**

- **Self-Management**
- **Working with Others**
- **Problem Solving**
- **Managing Information**
- **Thinking creatively**

# Homework

Ballylifford Primary School sees a value in children engaging in homework and we firmly believe it is an important part of children's educational development. It is a means of revising work done, discovering information unavailable in school. Parents are encouraged to support their child with their homework each evening as they are positively involved in their child's learning and in the development of positive work habits.

Against this must be balanced each child's need for recreation and the development of private interests and hobbies.

Homework is linked to work covered in class and it is our policy to set homework daily except Friday or holiday periods (although there can be exceptions in special circumstances).

A detailed Homework Policy is available on request. Parents are encouraged to sign homework diaries, reading records weekly and to communicate any concerns in the parents' comment section provided.

## Special Educational Needs

Ballylifford PS is an all-inclusive school and all children are welcome.

Individual Education Plans are drawn up to ensure a carefully planned programme is in place for children with Special Educational Needs. Teachers monitor, assess and record children's learning and progress regularly using a range of strategies to ensure needs are being met and to set targets for the future.

The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator liaises closely with the Principal and staff to ensure that the needs of all children are being met by supporting staff with the formulation of individual education plans and resources. The school has a comprehensive monitoring and screening programme in place from P1 to identify children with individual needs. Should a child's problems present as more complex, then the school will enlist the help of external professional agencies. The school currently have teachers trained in reading recovery and Catch Up Literacy and Numeracy along with classroom assistants trained in reading partnership.

# Extra-Curricular Activities

**Ballylifford Primary School considers extra-curricular activities to be a very valuable dimension in the education of our children.**

**With teacher expertise, parental/family involvement and external agencies we provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities throughout the school year.**

**We believe that every child can develop and extend their gifts and talents through all activities on offer.**

**Extra-Curricular Activities are:**

**Gaelic Football, Camogie, Soccer, Netball, Hockey, Art, Cross Country running, Crochet, Tin Whistle, Guitar, Golf, Drama, ICT, Gardening and Swimming**





# Assessing and Reporting

Assessment is an integral part of the learning process and we recognise that the main purposes of assessment are:

- 1. To observe in a systematic way each child's progress.*
- 2. To provide information about children that will assist the teacher planning future work.*

The school will monitor each child's progress carefully through a range of assessment techniques and strategies. For children with special needs, a comprehensive programme of class-based teacher support is available.

All parents are kept fully informed of their child's progress. The school will assess and report annually on each child's progress in:

- Areas of Learning;
- Cross-Curricular Skills
- Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities.

At Ballylifford PS we have an integrated approach to curriculum assessment and record keeping. Assessment is continuous, allowing teachers to build up a systematic record of children's progress and achievement throughout each year and Key Stage.

Parents are invited in the first term to discuss their child's progress with the class teacher and an annual written report is issued in the third term when the teachers will comment further on their child's progress.

Parents who wish to discuss their child's progress at any other time during the year may arrange to speak to the Principal or their child's class teacher by contacting the school and arranging an appointment.

Parents are also encouraged to become involved in their child's education and are welcome to attend: Assemblies, Book Fairs, Sports Day, Prize Giving, Liturgical events and PTA events.

# Personal Development and Mutual Understanding

Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) focuses on encouraging each child to become personally, emotionally and socially effective, to lead healthy, safe and fulfilled lives and to become confident, independent and responsible citizens, making informed and responsible choices and decisions throughout their lives. Through a variety of learning experiences pupils are encouraged to develop their self-confidence and self-esteem.





# Religious Education

**Our Religious Education programme is based on the Grow in Love series from Foundation Stage to Key Stage 2. It prepares each child for participation in the liturgy and sacraments of the Catholic Church. Religious Education is not restricted to a timetabled lesson but pervades the whole life of the school.**

**Ballylifford PS is a vibrant part of the parish and we liaise closely with our Parish Council to create opportunities for our pupils to contribute to the life of the Parish.**





# Ballylifford Primary School

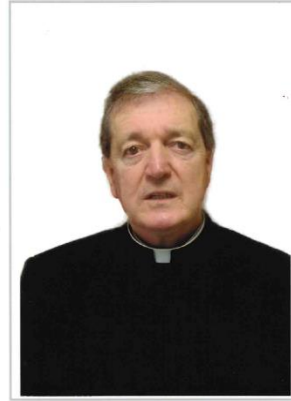
## Child Protection and Safeguarding Team



Mrs Siobhan Sweeney  
Designated  
Child Protection Teacher



Ms Sheila Hurl  
Deputy Designated  
Child Protection Teacher



Rev. Fr. Peter Donnelly  
Designated Governor  
For Child Protection



Mrs Claire McOsker  
Deputy Designated Governor  
For Child Protection

**Rev. Fr. Peter Donnelly:** Chairperson Board of Governors & Designated Governor for Child Protection

**Mrs Claire McOsker:** EA Governor & Deputy Designated Governor for Child Protection

**Mrs Siobhan Sweeney:** Designated Teacher for Child Protection

**Ms Sheila Hurl:** Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection

**Mr Ciaran McElroy:** Principal

**Ballylifford Primary School is fully committed to the care and protection of all our children. Everyone who works in our school; teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers have clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The welfare of each child is our paramount consideration. The problem of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school.**

**The Board of Governors of Ballylifford have a Safeguarding Team who closely monitor all aspects of Child Protection within the school.**

**A copy of our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is available on request.**

# Ballylifford Primary School

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## SAFEGUARDING TEAM

WHEN I AM SAD, WORRIED OR UPSET I CAN TALK TO



Mrs Siobhan Sweeney  
Designated Teacher  
for Child Protection



Ms Sheila Hurl  
Deputy Designated Teacher  
for Child Protection

OR ANY MEMBER OF STAFF



# Pastoral Care

**Pastoral Care permeates all areas of school life at Ballylifford PS and the school prides itself on its child centred provision. It reflects the values, attitudes and beliefs of our Catholic faith. Being a small school means that we are a closely knit school community and each child feels a strong sense of belonging. We work hard to ensure everyone in the school community feels valued by working as a team and respecting each other's roles. Self-respect and respect for others are at the centre of the school's ethos.**

**We are committed to the development and well-being of our pupils and see them as individuals with their own strengths and talents. Through the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum our pupils are encouraged to work to the best of their ability and are given opportunities to achieve success in a variety of contexts thus promoting self-esteem.**

**All staff members work towards creating a happy school atmosphere in which children can feel safe and secure and enjoy the experience of school. It is the responsibility of each class teacher to look after the pastoral needs of the children in their class and will attempt to resolve any worries pupils may experience and to relieve their anxieties.**





# Parental and Community Involvement

At Ballylifford P.S we aim to involve parents and the community as much as possible in the life of the school for the benefit of all our pupils. We encourage parents to keep in touch with the progress of their child and become actively involved in the life of the school through:

- Our termly School Newsletter.
- Our excellent school PTA 'Friends of Ballylifford'
- An open door policy for parents to arrange meetings with staff to discuss the progress of their child.
- Formal parent teacher meetings.
- A written progress report at the end of the school year.
- Attendance at a variety of yearly celebrations, assemblies and liturgical events.
- Strong parental support for fundraising.
- Assisting our extra-curricular activities

We have a very active PTA 'Friends of Ballylifford' who support the school by raising monies throughout the year to fund the purchase of new resources. It is a great way to get to know the school and become involved in the school community. New members are always welcome.



# General Information

## School Day

**School Starts:** 9.00 am. (Supervision is provided from 8:30am)

**(Due to COVID restrictions morning supervision is now from 8:45am)**

**Break:** P3-P4 (10:25-10:40am)

P1-P2 and P5/P6/P7 (10:50-11:05am)

**Lunch:** P1-P4 (12:15-1:00pm)

P5/P6/P7 (12:25-1:10pm)

**School Finishes:** 2:00pm for children in P1-P2

2:50pm for children in P3-P4.

3.00pm for children in P5/P6/P7

After School Club is available for children in P1-P2 from 2:00pm to 3:00pm.

**(This is currently unavailable due to COVID restrictions)**

For safety reasons, parents are asked to collect their child/children from the school playground at the rear of the school.

Prompt collection of pupils at their designated time is also very much appreciated as this allows staff to continue with planned school development work/meetings promptly.

# School Uniform

We expect children to wear our school uniform at all times as it gives a sense of identity, reflects the individuality of the school and contributes to our school ethos. We appreciate the support from all parents in adhering to these guidelines.

Girls Uniform	Boys Uniform
Navy sweatshirt with school crest	Navy sweatshirt with school crest
Yellow polo shirt	Yellow polo shirt
Navy skirt/trousers/tracksuit bottoms (no sporting logos)	Navy trousers/tracksuit bottoms (no sporting logos)
Navy/white tights or socks	

# PE Uniform

Pupils will be able to wear full PE kit and half-zip along with current navy bottoms and leggings to school every Friday for MAPS day, timetabled PE days and for any sporting events they may attend throughout the year. In the Spring and Summer months, PE shorts can be worn as part of the school uniform.



## OFFICIAL SCHOOL PRODUCTS



*School uniform can be purchased from Select Kidz and Sportique Sports Shop, Magherafelt. PE uniform can be purchased from O'Neill's Store Magherafelt.*



# Physical Education

Sport is valued and has a high profile. Each class receive two PE lessons weekly to ensure each child become fit, healthy and confident. The children are timetabled for lessons in dance, gymnastics, athletics and games. All children throughout Key Stage Two have the opportunity to attend swimming lessons. The school benefits from the skills of coaches from the Department of Education/Ulster GAA, Derry County Board and Mid-Ulster Active Communities. We are also very lucky to have strong and committed parental and community support who use their sporting expertise to develop the children's skills after school and work as helpers during sporting outings and events.



# School Meals

School dinners follow the nutritional standards and are provided by the canteen staff. The cost of school dinners are £2.60 but this changes annually. Again, prices are communicated to parents at the start of each school year and updated when needed. We encourage all dinner monies to be put in a money bag/envelope and labelled with the child's name. Menus are sent home at the start of each month for the month ahead and uploaded onto the school website. For pupils who prefer to have a packed lunch, we encourage parents to ensure the lunch is healthy and nut free.



# Healthy Breaks

The school promotes a healthy break. Children may bring water or milk and a healthy snack such as a piece of fruit, pancake or a cracker.





# **If a child feels unwell in school**

Should your child feel unwell in school, the school will contact you to let you know and, if necessary, arrange for collection. It is therefore vitally important that the school has up to date contact details for all parents, as well as a first choice contact number in case of an Emergency.

It is the policy of the school to make contact with parents should your child receive a head injury. It is then left to the parents' own discretion whether the child stays in school or is taken home.

Mrs Sweeney and Mr McElroy are trained in emergency First Aid and all staff members have received First Aid at work training.

## **Attendance**

Regular attendance at school is vitally important. We expect children to attend school every day when well enough to do so. If a child is absent from school, we request a note explaining the nature of the absence on the child's return to school.

If children need to be taken out of school to attend appointments, parents are asked to sign their child out in the folder provided at school office, for Child Protection requirements.

## **School Newsletter & SCHOOLS NI Messaging Service**

Each term, the school sends a Newsletter home to keep parents up-to-date with all that is happening in school and futures dates and events. This is also a nice way of celebrating achievements in school. The school will also keep parents informed using the **SCHOOL NI app** linked to our school website for public and private messaging to the school community.



# Anti-Bullying

In Ballylifford PS we take a pro-active approach to bullying. Bullying and its effects are explored in all classes in a wide variety of ways as outlined in our Anti-Bullying Policy which is available on request. Bullying is an issue which is taken very seriously by the school management and all incidents will be dealt with in accordance with the procedures outlined in our Anti-Bullying Policy.



# **Charging & Remission Policy**

**Education in Ballylifford Primary School is provided free of charge for all lessons and activities connected with the child's entitlement under The Education Reform Order.**

**The school will, as it has done in the past, appeal to parents from time to time for voluntary donations but it is stressed that no child will be disadvantaged in any way if parents choose not to make a contribution.**

**The school may take part in optional extras which are not connected with the school's formal curriculum, such as visits to the theatre/school trips or other educational visits. Charges will be made for these but it is again stressed that failure to participate in these will not affect a child's performance at school. Written Parental consent will be required before a child participates in school trips.**

**We must stress how grateful we are for the support we have received in the past in the form of voluntary contributions from all members of the local community.**

**For school information, policies and other documents, please contact the school office or you can view all information on our school website**

**[www.ballyliffordps.com](http://www.ballyliffordps.com)**

**You can follow our school Twitter account [@BallyliffordPS](https://twitter.com/BallyliffordPS) to receive all news updates and upcoming events.**







# School Visitors

All visitors to the school, including parents, are kindly asked to report to reception if needing to pass on a message to their child or speak to a member of staff during the school day. This monitoring helps the school maintain Child Protection requirements by knowing who is on the premises at any given time. All who work in school appreciate your co-operation with this important matter.

**(Due to COVID restrictions visitors are not permitted to enter the school building)**

## Mid-Academic Year Changes

If there are any changes in the information in this Prospectus during the school year, all parents will be informed in writing of the nature of such changes.

## Further Information

Thank you for taking the time to read our prospectus. We hope you are impressed with what we have to offer. However, no prospectus can ever provide a complete picture of the life of a school.

In addition, no prospectus can ever be definitive because as a school we are always trying to make things better for our children and sometimes we have to make changes to improve what we are already doing. We look forward to inspiring excellence in your child, providing positive and caring examples of manners and behaviour, ensuring that your child understands the importance of commitment to their learning. We will strive to provide for your child to be the best they can be to fulfil their potential, with lots of positive encouragement, care and support.

Parents are very welcome to make arrangements to visit the school with the Principal, Mr McElroy, and you can also visit our school website.

School visits are available this year, rather than an Open Night due to COVID so please contact the school at any time.

# Ballylifford Primary School



**Mr. Cianan McElroy**  
Principal  
P5, P6, & P7 Teacher



**Mrs. Siobhan Sweeney**  
P1 & P2 Teacher



**Mrs. Sheila Hurl**  
P3 & P4 Teacher



**Mrs. Dolores Muldoon**  
P5, P6 & P7  
Principal Release Teacher



**Mrs. Caroline Quinn**  
Classroom Assistant



**Mrs. Rosemary Donnelly**  
Classroom Assistant



**Mrs. Orla Rocks**  
Classroom Assistant &  
Catering Assistant



**Ms. Wendy Heath**  
Clerical Officer &  
Classroom Assistant



**Mrs. Brigida Ann Heron**  
Catering Unit Supervisor



**Mr. John McCorry**  
Building Supervisor



**BALLYLIFFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL**

142 Ballinderry Bridge Road  
Cookstown  
Co Tyrone  
BT80 0AY

**PRINCIPAL:** Mr Ciaran McElroy

**Tel / Fax:** 028 79418388

**Email:** [info@ballylifford.cookstown.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@ballylifford.cookstown.ni.sch.uk)

**Website:** [www.ballyliffordps.com](http://www.ballyliffordps.com)

**Twitter:** @BallyliffordPS



