

August 2023

Dear Parent,

Welcome to the beginning of the 2023/24 school year. I hope you have all enjoyed your summer break and that our pupils are ready for another busy and exciting year in school. I would like to extend our warmest welcome to our P1s, the newest members of our school family. A warm welcome also to the Cubitt family who have also joined us.

The pupils all looked wonderful today in their new red uniform and Key Stage 2 pupils all looked very smart. PE days are listed within the information below; pupils should wear their joggers and polo shirts as well as appropriate footwear on these days.

I am sure that parents and pupils alike would like to join me in congratulating Mrs Hobson on the birth of her son, Harry. Both mum and baby are at home and doing very well.

The information provided below is important for the smooth running of our school and I would ask you to read carefully over each section.

GENERAL INFORMATION

ABSENCE

If possible, please telephone the school to notify us that your child will be absent. A note explaining the reason for absence should be sent to your child's class teacher on their return to school. Pupils arriving **after 9.00am** will be marked as '**late**'.

The Board Education Welfare Officer monitors attendance and should attendance fall below 85% may contact the parents concerned.

Holidays taken during term time – please note that staff will not provide work for this time. Any worksheets etc. missed may be completed at home on your child's return to school however these will not be marked by staff.

ATTENDANCE TARGETS

The school expects individual attendance of at least *95% and an overall school attendance of 97%+ over the academic year.

ATTENDANCE INFORMATION DATA

100% Attendance	0 days missed	Excellent
95-99% Attendance	1-8 days absence	Good-Very Good
95% Attendance	1-8 days' absence 1 week and 4 days of learning missed	Satisfactory
90% Attendance	19 days of absence 3 weeks and 4 days of learning missed	Poor
85% Attendance	28 days of absence 5 weeks and 3 days of learning missed	Very Poor Referral to EWS
80% Attendance	38 days of absence 7 weeks and 3 days of learning missed	Unacceptable
75% Attendance	46 days of absence 9 weeks and 1 day of learning missed	Unacceptable

The table above is based on DE guidance – School Attendance Matters – A Parent's Guide.

Late arrival will be monitored and parents will be contacted if there is persistent lateness.

A copy of this newsletter is available on the school website

<https://www.parkgate-primary.co.uk/>

SCHOOL OPENING HOURS

To ensure and maintain required standards of Health and Safety and to comply with Child Protection/Safeguarding protocol we are notifying you of the school's "Opening Hours".

Monday – Thursday 8:45am – 4:15pm

Friday 8:45am – 3:15pm

PLEASE NOTE that staff are not permitted to give pupils/parents/relatives access to the school building prior to or after these opening hours.

In exceptional circumstances, if a parent/relative is unavoidably delayed for pick up, a member of staff will remain with a pupil/pupils while an alternative pick-up arrangement is organized.

Phone calls will be answered via the school office from:

8:45am – 4:15pm Monday – Thursday

8:45am – 3:15pm Friday

A telephone answering machine is available for use during hours of closure.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION

The school has a policy for the administration of medicines and this may be requested from the school office.

- Parents/carers should keep their child / children at home if they are unwell or infectious to enhance their recovery and for the health and wellbeing of the whole school community.
- For the health and wellbeing of the whole school community staff will **not** administer any "Short Term Medication".
- Parents / carers will be permitted to visit the school to administer medication and will be required to record the administration details on a "Record of SHORT TERM MEDICATION administered by a parent / carer" form.
- Parents / carers are responsible for providing the school with appropriate information regarding their child's/children's **ongoing** medical condition and medication.
- Medication will not be accepted by the school without receipt of a completed "Ongoing Medical Condition Form". A form is attached for your convenience.

HEALTHY EATING & DRINKS

We encourage our pupils to have a balanced diet as part of a healthy lifestyle. To support this, we have a healthy break each day. Chocolate bars and sweets are not permitted at either break or lunchtime. We also encourage our pupils to bring water into school which they are permitted to drink during class. For your convenience, and to reduce plastic waste, we would ask you use refillable drinks containers.

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SCHOOL HOLIDAYS 2023/24

All holidays are available to view on the school's website. See link below.

<https://www.parkgate-primary.co.uk/school-holiday-dates>

SCHOOL DINNERS

School lunches recommence on **Thursday 31 August**. Payment should be sent on **Tuesday 29 August** in a clearly labelled envelope as listed below.

School dinners are **£2.60 per day (£13.00 per week)**.

A dinner menu is attached and will be sent home with your child/ren tomorrow. It will also be available to download from the school's website.

<https://www.parkgate-primary.co.uk/school-dinners-menu>

If you wish to order school dinners, please follow these instructions:

- Payment is required **weekly** in advance.
- Payment should be made on a **Monday** (unless your child/children is/are absent).
- Payment by **cash only**.
- Payment should be placed in a sealed envelope.
- **On the front of the envelope please specify:**
 - **your child's/children's name/s**
 - **the days on which school dinners are required**
 - **the monetary amount enclosed**

Pupils who are absent for prepaid dinners will be issued with a credit by the school.

CURRICULUM MEETINGS

P2 – P7 Curriculum Meetings will be held on **Tuesday 29 August** and **Wednesday 30 August**. The purpose of these meetings is to provide parents with information about the year ahead for each of our classes. The afternoons will take the following format;

School will close for ALL pupils (P1 – P7) at 12.00pm on both dates.

Tuesday 29 August – Meeting Times

P2	1.15pm - 2.00pm
P3	2.15pm – 3.00pm

Wednesday 30 August – Meeting Times

P4/5	1.15pm - 2.00pm
P6/7	2.15pm – 3.00pm

Pupils **should not** attend the meetings.

Parents should not regard this time as an opportunity to engage your child's teacher in discussions around individual progress.

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FREE SCHOOL MEALS - CURRENT ELIGIBLE FAMILIES AND NEW APPLICANTS - REMINDER

Parents/guardians who are eligible are required to register and create an account before applying. Please check your details carefully before you submit. An information leaflet is attached.

<https://freeschoolmealsanduniforms.eani.org.uk/>

PE TIMETABLE

Monday	P5-P7 + P3/4
Wednesday	P1/2
Thursday	P3/4 (All year) P5-P7 (Jan – Mar)
Friday	P1/2

PARENT/CARER CONTACT WITH TEACHING STAFF

The school's procedures for parents/carers seeking contact with staff are as follows;

- Daily messages should **only** be communicated via a short written note from the parent/carer to the relevant teacher.
- **No messages will be relayed between the morning playground supervisor and teaching staff.**
- All visitors to the school **must** report to the office where a member of staff will assist with an enquiry.
- If necessary, an appointment will be scheduled with the relevant staff and parents/guardians will be informed as soon as possible. **Issues to be discussed must be clarified in advance to enable the relevant staff to make appropriate preparation.**
- Due to daily preparation and teaching commitments appointments will be scheduled at times between **3.10pm and 4pm.**
- School office hours to receive phone calls are between 08:45am and 4:15pm Monday to Thursday and 08:45am and 3:15pm on Fridays.

PARENT/CARER CONTACT WITH THE PRINCIPAL

The Principal's teaching days are Monday – Wednesday. Contact with the Principal without an appointment between 8.45am and 9.00am should only be made in exceptional circumstances where a note or phone call to the office is not appropriate. To arrange an appointment with the Principal please contact the office. Appointments will be arranged between the following times.

Monday – Wednesday 3.10pm – 4pm
Thursday – Friday 1.00pm – 3pm

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CLASSES 2023-24

Mrs. V Ferguson/Mrs. H McAuley	P6/7	Classroom Assistant – Mrs Martin
Mrs. L Kennedy	P4/5	
Mrs. C McLean	P3	
Mrs. L Magowan/Mrs. C Dunn	P1/2	Classroom Assistant – Mrs Bell

FINANCE MATTERS

The EA is in the process of sourcing an online payment system. Until such times as a system is approved by EANI, payments will continue to be collected via bank transfer or in cash.

AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS

These will commence the week beginning **Monday 25 September** for **P2-P7** pupils. Further information will follow.

PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION

Our PTA provides much needed and greatly valued support for our school not only in terms of financial assistance but also in providing social events for both pupils and parents. I would encourage everyone to lend their support to the PTA, whether this is by becoming a member or by attending the various events throughout the year.

PARENT VOLUNTEER LIST

Throughout the year we may need to ask assistance from parents to supervise trips or provide transport for our pupils. This is only possible if parents have Access NI clearance. If you are available to assist and wish your name to be put on a 'Parent Volunteer List' please contact the office for the appropriate information.

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

In accordance with child protection legislation all schools must annually inform parents of the designated teachers for child protection.

If you have any concerns regarding your child or another child's safety you should share these concerns with our Designated Teacher for Child Protection and Safeguarding, *Mrs Ferguson* or Interim Deputy Designated teacher, Mrs McLean.

A summary of the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be distributed next week. P1 parents have already received this information as part of your induction pack.

COMMUNITY LINKS

Randalstown Ladies Hockey Club – please see attached information.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY (cont'd on next page)

28.08.23	School closure – August Bank Holiday
29.08.23	Curriculum Meetings P2 and P3 Pupils collected at 12pm
30.08.23	Curriculum Meetings P4/5 and P6/7 Pupils collected at 12pm
31.08.23	All pupils to attend – normal timetable applies

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14.09.23	Whole School Photographs
25.09.23	After School Clubs commence P2-P7 pupils
27.09.23	Macmillan Coffee Afternoon
29.09.23	School Closure – School Development Day 1
18.10.23	Harvest Assembly
05.10.23	P1 Parent Consultations
25.10.23	P2-P7 Parent Consultations
26.10.23	P2–P7 Parent Consultations
12.12.23	Christmas Concert (6.30pm)

Mrs V Ferguson
(PRINCIPAL)

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