

ENNISKILLEN MODEL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Late October/November 2024

Dear Parent

Hopefully all the children will have an enjoyable and safe half-term holiday and a well-earned rest. We close at the normal time on Friday, 25th October and re-open again on Monday, 4th November. The school will be hosting a multi-sports club for four days during this week (as relayed separately by Ross).

You may find the following information of interest as we enter the remaining weeks of this term.

A NEW SCHOOL APP IS BEING ROLLED OUT. MRS HURST HAS KINDLY PREPARED SOME GUIDANCE IN THE HOPE THAT ALL PARENTS WILL DOWNLOAD THIS APP VERY SOON – SEE OVERLEAF. WE PLAN TO USE IT MORE EXTENSIVELY COME NOVEMBER.

WE NOW OPERATE AN ELECTRONIC SIGN IN/OUT SYSTEM IN THE MAIN FOYER. WE ARE KEEN FOR PARENTS TO START TO USE THIS SYSTEM – INSTRUCTIONS ARE LOCATED BESIDE THE LAPTOP.

As previously advised, a **Governors' Annual Report** has been posted on our website. This is located on the Home page and in the section entitled Governors. It is a Department of Education requirement to produce a report on an annual basis to summarise the previous year's delivery. It does provide a good snapshot of what a busy school year entails and alludes to the many pressures but equally the excellent support from staff, parents and pupils this school benefits from.

Thank you to many parents who, after being randomly selected, completed a questionnaire to help with the review of our **School Development Plan**. Areas highlighted will help when considering incoming priorities. A synopsis of this year's plan will be posted on the website later in the term – designed to have an environment that strives for safety, happiness, learning and learning enough.

P.T.A. CHRISTMAS FAIR – Saturday, 30th November (2.00 to 5.00p.m.) Details will follow closer to the time from Mrs Webb (Chair). This event is already generating much interest and will include Christmas art & craft stalls, Santa's grotto as well as various free fun activities for the children - bouncy slides etc.

The run up to Christmas is short but we prefer that the focus on Christmas does not start until late November (only the Fair has changed this from being December!) The delay helps keep the children in a good routine and not distracted from their work. The P4 children will be the exception – they will be starting rehearsals for their Christmas production a little earlier. This year they perform for parents and relatives

on **Thursday, 12th December at 7.00p.m. – ‘Bethlehem’s Ballroom’**. From early December, the P1 and P2 classes will also be preparing for their Christmas sing-alongs with performances scheduled for the morning of **Wednesday, 18th December**. Details to follow closer to the time. **Cancer Focus Northern Ireland** will be supported through retiring collections. This charity plans to open a Therapeutic Support Centre in Enniskillen (in 2025) and the funds we raise will go directly to help this worthy local initiative.

In the interim period, I have arranged for all classes to engage with the following two Theatre groups between now and Christmas and rather than ask for smaller amounts of money at separate times, a set fee is being requested to cover both at once.

November, 11th – West Midland’s Image Musical Theatre – another touring group (one afternoon performance of ‘The Selfish Giant’ for all pupils). This group visits every year and comes highly recommended. **AS THIS IS AN AFTERNOON PERFORMANCE ALL CHILDREN IN P1, P2 AND P3 WILL BE STAYING UNTIL 3.15p.m. THAT DAY. NOTE LATER PICK-UP.**

November, 29th - Banyan Theatre – a more local touring puppet theatre (performing several differently pitched performances all day). This group visits every year and is always well received. Normal going home arrangements will apply.

To cover the above, we are asking for a reduced fee of £3.00 per pupil which should be sent to your child’s class teacher by Monday, 11th November – thank you.

In addition, the P1, P2 and Language Centre classes will be attending an Ardhowen Theatre Christmas performance of ‘Goldilocks and the Three Bears’ on Monday, 16th December (money already collected – thank you).

The P3 pupils will be taking part in an Elf themed activity at the Marble Arch Caves on Thursday, 5th or Friday, 6th December and all P1 to P7 pupils will be attending pantomimes in either Devenish or Fivemiletown Colleges on Friday, 13th December – P1, P2, P3, P4 and P7 are going to Devenish and P5 and P6 to Fivemiletown. The Colleges dictate the pantomime fee. Further details and fee requests to follow.

In the interim:

Thank you to pupils and staff in P3J and P5K for helping the school focus on Harvest of late. The associated Harvest Food Bank collections have again been well supported and the organisers will no doubt be delighted with the effort made.

Similarly, the half-term P.T.A. Disco is generating a lot of interest (Thursday, 24th) – thank you.

To coincide with Remembrance Day, the school will be selling poppies, observing a one minute's silence, and having representation at the Cenotaph's wreath laying ceremony on Sunday, 10th.

After school activities start again just after half-term (Monday, 4th). Another 4-week programme of the same activities (to earlier this term) is on offer – a reminder accompanies this letter. Attendance is encouraged.

The after-school homework club remains open until 5.30p.m. everyday. This can be availed of flexibly.

BREAKFAST MORNINGS this term: Friday, 25th October and Friday, 29th November (not charity related). The last Breakfast morning managed to raise upwards of £1,000 for the Macmillan Cancer Charity – thank you for supporting. Mrs McCaffrey organises these mornings meticulously – thank you.

LUNCH MENU – a copy is on our website's home page alongside guidance about how to apply for free school meals (this can be found under the Parents tab and School Meals).

WHOLE SCHOOL CHRISTMAS LUNCH – Wednesday, 11th December.

End of Term – **Friday, 20th December** (earlier staggered home times).

School re-opens on **Monday, 6th January**.

UNIFORM POLICY: I have been pleased with the standard of uniform this term, and particularly the wearing of black shoes. For P3 and up a proper school P.E. kit is worn on designated P.E. days (only) – this is working well. I do know that some children like to wear plain dark leggings/thermals underneath their P.E. shorts or blue socks rolled up above the knees (on their P.E. day) which helps in the colder weather. This is more than acceptable and avoids going back to the old (and discouraged policy) of all sorts of garish tracksuit bottoms being worn to school. Uniform standards slip very quickly when this is allowed to happen – thank you for your input in this regard. **Coats need to be brought to school on all occasions (and named).**

If waiting on the school grounds from 2.45 to 3.15p.m. (only applicable to those parents who have later pick-ups), children playing on the playgrounds/play trails at these times are the sole responsibility of parents. No small play equipment such as balls should be used/brought to school. Play trails are also not to be accessed until 8.30a.m. in the morning – this means that staff are on duty from this time.

Please also ensure that homeworks are monitored closely as is school policy. Children must make their best effort and despite the reliance on ICT, it should never take away from the great need to focus on consistent standards of Literacy as well as taking care with the presentation of work. Google Classroom is being used more widely as a way

of highlighting homework requirements and to display many things that happen in school – it is important that parents are familiar with this system and access it on a regular basis. The teachers frequently use Google Classroom as a way of relaying key messages and celebrating all that is done.

PRIMARY ONE ENROLMENT AND ADMISSIONS

Enrolment details will be forwarded to parents later in the term regarding the admission of Primary 1 pupils for September 2025. If you do not have your child's details on record in school, please notify the school as soon as possible. Thank you for sharing this information with other prospective parents. Details can be checked/relayed by telephoning the school (66324865) or by emailing to info@enniskillenmodel.enniskillen.ni.sch.uk

All children must have turned four on or before July 1st 2025 to commence Primary 1 next September and it is irrelevant what pre-school they currently attend – this has little to do with our Primary 1 admissions process. It is important that parents have names on our system well before the Education Authority application process opens in January.

Details about our INDUCTION APPROACHES will be in circulation soon. The 'Come and Learn through Play' afternoons have started with the next two scheduled for 2.30p.m. on Fridays, 15th November and 13th December. All pre-school pupils are very welcome.

Parents are being asked to be vigilant to prevent outbreaks of head lice at the school – which can be a common occurrence at this time of year. If lice are detected, please treat, and let the class teacher know immediately. There is no outbreak at present.

REMINDER. P3 AND UP: IF BRINGING WATER TO SCHOOL PLEASE USE REUSABLE WATER BOTTLES. SIMILARLY, AVOID DISPOSABLE MATERIAL IF SENDING A PACKED LUNCH. GUIDANCE WAS SENT HOME EARLIER THIS TERM TO ENCOURAGE THE PACKING OF HEALTHY BREAKS AND LUNCHES. THANK YOU.

Please ensure that children take extra care during the darker mornings and afternoons coming to and from school. This includes children who are allowed to access the school unaccompanied (a parent's decision). The traffic lights (green man)/pedestrian crossings must be properly adhered to and children must not cross diagonally to avoid waiting for two sets of lights to change. As a school, we do not stipulate how old your child must be to come/leave school unaccompanied by an adult, but we do feel that such an arrangement is best left until children are in the older classes (P5 and up). Similarly, younger children should not be allowed to run ahead of the adult in charge of them – vehicles can move very quickly and drivers can potentially not see small children if reversing, for example. The pedestrian crossings on the site are there to be used.

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS IN THE EVENT OF EXTREME WEATHER:

I feel it prudent to offer some tentative advice should the weather significantly deteriorate this winter. You may remember that in previous winters this school remained open throughout (despite the weather) and messages were conveyed to confirm this (often by text). We were forced to close once last year but only because we had to operate the same policy as all other schools in the town.

You may find the following guidance from us of some help if difficult weather conditions are evident again. It is impossible to cover every eventuality and often decisions are made at short notice:

- Assume that this school will always be open regardless of the severity of the weather the evening before/on a morning.
- Many staff live close to the school and are therefore always able to access/open the building. Lights on the Wickham Place side of the building will confirm that the school is open.
- There is no need to telephone if conditions are bad – just assume the school will be open.
- The same arrangements will apply (as happens during the rest of the year) – the school will officially open from 8.30a.m. The doors will remain locked until this time.
- The decision to send your child to school must be made by you and based on your own circumstances – where you live, travel safety, buses operating etc.
- We have no input regarding buses/taxis etc. The decision by them not to operate is often not relayed to school (for morning travel). School is sometimes informed if there is a problem for afternoon travel and, if so, every effort will be made to contact the parents of the children affected.
- Registration will be delayed (**until 11.00a.m.**) to allow more time for those who may find it more difficult to get to school. Children arriving later in the morning will be included on the attendance records and not penalised.
- Vehicle and pedestrian access to the school (in most places) is flat and pathways will be cleared to allow safer access for staff, parents and pupils. This may take some time but every effort will be made to have cleared/salted pathways to the various entrances. The children will be briefed periodically about using these cleared areas safely (and informed about areas that are out of bounds).
- **The car park areas can be problematic** – for vehicles and pedestrians. It will often not be possible to clear/salt these areas and therefore parents and staff will need to exercise extra care (including deciding whether to access them at all).
- Every effort will be made to have several members of staff on duty near the entrances of the school from 8.30 a.m. (and at the end of school, as appropriate) to guide children to use the cleared/salted pathways to the access doors. This may not necessarily prevent falls/injuries being incurred in getting to and from the entrance doors.
- If some staff/pupils are unable to make it to school, alternative cover arrangements will be organised. It is perfectly acceptable for staff to make

decisions about whether it is safe for them to travel/leave later (and inform me accordingly).

- Decisions will be made during the day about whether children are to be allowed outside – a risk assessment will be made following consultation with the caretaker and senior leadership team.
- Should children be in school and there is a marked deterioration in the weather parents may telephone/call in to make alternative arrangements i.e. take children home earlier (as deemed appropriate). It may also be necessary for school to send out a text message if earlier pick-ups, for example, are being advised – again, this will only happen in very extreme situations.
- The school phone lines can be busy. If so, please use the school's email address – info@enniskillenmodel.enniskillen.ni.sch.uk (this address is checked periodically during the day).
- **Text messaging will be the main point of contact with parents in this school but also keep an eye on the homework diary/Google Classroom as notes may need to be circulated. Any changes to mobile numbers need to be relayed to Helen so that messages filter through.**
- The After School Homework Club will remain open. Only in very extreme, deteriorating conditions will earlier pickups be advised.

N.B. You will be reminded about this advice later in the term. Any changes etc. will be relayed then. It is hoped that conditions are not going to be too bad.

HAVING A CLEAR OUT BEFORE CHRISTMAS? FEEL FREE TO USE THE BOOK AND CLOTHING BANKS JUST OFF THE CASTLECOOLE ROAD CAR PARK (EXIT GATE).

Should you require clarification on these or other points, please do not hesitate in contacting me.

Yours sincerely

W. Glass
Principal