

October Newsletter

On behalf of the Board of Governors and the staff I want to thank you all for assisting us throughout September with our new routines. We really appreciate your support. The children have all adapted so well to our new routines.

School Photos



Opus Photography will be coming into school on **Thursday 8th October** to take individual photos. Please ensure all permission slips are returned by tomorrow. Due to Covid-19 restrictions we cannot offer family photographs or allow younger family members to come into school for photos. We need to keep our children in their class bubbles. Only those with a signed permission form will have their photograph taken. All pupils should come in full school uniform on Thursday as there will be no PE on Thursday for any class.

Parent/Teacher Consultations



Due to Covid 19 restrictions, the Autumn parent/teacher meetings will take place **via a telephone call** during the week **Monday 19th and Friday 23rd October (1.15 – 4pm)**. You should have received a letter to indicate the afternoons that would suit you. To ensure the staff can get through the necessary interviews throughout that week all children will be finishing at an earlier time that week.

Staggered finish

P1/2 – 12.40pm P2/3 – 12.45pm P4/5 – 12.50pm P5/6 – 12.55pm P6/7 – 1.00pm
(Anyone with older siblings can be collected at the pick-up time for the oldest child)

You will then be advised of the time allocated for your call next week. When this arrives, please take careful note of the time as teachers have a very busy timetable on each of their interview days and re-scheduling is very difficult. Pupils with more than one child will be timetabled for the calls on the same afternoon where possible.

Please note that for classes where the teaching is split between two staff members, the interviews will usually be done by the class teacher working on the day selected. For those parents who do not live together, could I ask that this note is shared and a suitable day agreed for your telephone interview, as each teacher allocates one slot per child.

The school bus will be available at 1pm every day that week for those children who normally travel home by bus.

Half Term Holiday

School will be closed **Monday 26th to Friday 30th October**.



School Pens



School pens are still on sale in school at a cost of £2.50.

Assessments & The Engage Programme

The staff have been assessing the pupils over the last few weeks to identify the areas that they need more support with. The Department of Education have devised a programme called 'Engage' to support children as they restart their educational journey, through one to one, small group or team teaching. The aim of the programme is to limit any long-term adverse impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on educational standards. Each school has received some funding to provide the extra teaching resources. The funding was based on the Free School Meals percentage and is targeted at those schools with concentrations of disadvantage. As we don't meet the 28% FSM entitlement we have been allocated a number of sub cover days to provide this support. Miss Barnes our P6/7 teacher will be providing this support to pupils on a Monday and Tuesday in school during term one. The staff have identified the pupils who may need support within the areas of emotional wellbeing, literacy and numeracy. This will hopefully commence next week and your child may be included in these short small group sessions. Your child's teacher will discuss this with you during their parent/teacher consultation.

Staggered Arrival and Departure Times

We will continue with our current staggered arrival and departure times and will review them again at the end of October. All pupils should now be left at the back gate or the gate in front of the nursery, to walk to their entrance door. Nursery pupils can still be brought to and collected from the nursery door.

Afternoon pickups are working well. P1/2 and P2/3 parents should continue to stand socially distanced, outside their child's classroom window at the allocated time. Parents picking up P4-7 pupils should remain in their cars or stand socially distanced at the top of the back path and avoid coming into the playground.

Schoolbags- Pupils may bring a washable schoolbag, lunch bag and water bottle to and from school. Remember to clean these regularly. We leave these bags in the cloakroom (where possible) with the children's coats. We are still trying to minimise items brought into school from home. Pencil cases will still be left in school.



PE Uniform

Please ensure that your child is wearing the correct PE uniform on PE days. Please remember as the weather gets cold, if wearing tracksuit bottoms, they should be **plain navy** and the school jumper or navy hoodie may be worn on colder days.

Health

As we move into the colder weather, we are expecting children to get the usual colds and viral infections. Please assess your children carefully, you know them best and know if they are fit for school. In many cases, children with colds will be well enough to attend school and continue their learning with little or no interruption to their education. We would just ask that you remind them of good respiratory hygiene. In other cases, for instance where they have quite a heavy cold or a flu, they may need to take a day or two off to recover.

If you have any concerns about your child's health please contact your own GP or the PHA for medical advice and keep school informed of what advice you have been given.

Children should **not** attend school if:

- they appear unwell
- they, or a member of their household, displays any symptoms of COVID-19.

Symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- **A high temperature/fever**- this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back
- **A new continuous cough**: this means coughing a lot for more than 1 hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough it may be worse than usual)
- **Anosmia**: the loss or change in your normal sense of smell or taste.

If your child **does not** have any of the above symptoms, they **do not** require a test.

If a child presents as unwell in school, he/she will be isolated and supervised by a member of staff until collected by a parent. All relevant PHA guidelines must be followed.

Where an individual has COVID-19 symptoms and they refuse to book a test, they should not return to school for 14 days. The school must be informed as soon as possible



Sharing contact details with the PHA

In the event of a Covid-19 positive case in school, we may have to share some children's contact details with the Public Health Agency. For reference the PHA's Privacy Notice can be viewed at www.publichealth.hscni.net/privacy-notice

If you wish to **withdraw consent** for your contact details to be transferred electronically to the PHA in the event of a Covid 19 outbreak in school, please email Mrs McCluskey at jmcccluskey773@c2kni.net by Thursday 8th October.

School Meals

School meals and packed lunches continue to be eaten in the classrooms. This is working very well. It is still a single choice hot meal and a choice convenience sweet. Remember to place all dinner money in an envelope clearly labelled with the days your child wishes to take dinner and send it in on a Monday morning. Please also ensure that your child knows whether they are taking a packed lunch or a dinner each day. Please check the menu carefully with your child to ensure that they actually like what is being served that day. A few days last week we had children who were supposed to be taking dinner but did not like what was being served that day.

On occasions due to delayed deliveries, the catering supervisor may have to slightly change the planned menu but changes are avoided if at all possible. Remember to check the menu on the school website.



Free School Meals- Please remember if you are entitled to a free school meal apply through the Education Authority.

www.eani.org.uk/financial-help/free-school-meals-uniform-grants

Parents can apply if your son or daughter is in full-time education and if you are in receipt of one of the following benefits: - Income Support; Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance; Income Related Employment and Support Allowance; Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit; Child Tax Credit or Working Tax Credit with an annual taxable income of £16,190 or less; Universal credit and have net household earnings not exceeding £14,000 per year. If eligible, your child does not have to take FSM everyday.

Assemblies We have been able to participate in whole school assemblies using Zoom. These have been great for the children to feel part of the whole school community and celebrate each other's successes.

School Fund

Thank you to those who sent in their family contribution. We are very grateful for this donation and are already putting it to good use to purchase new equipment/resources for our classrooms. We have now placed an order for some new reading books for Foundation Stage and have bought new equipment for each class to play with at break and lunchtime. We have also purchased a new dishwasher for the nursery/foundation stage, to assist with the regular washing of plastic toys. We are very grateful to Mr Pedlow, one of our nursery parents, for installing the new dishwasher. It's great to have parents willing to assist in these ways. We really appreciate your support.

Communications

As we try to limit the amount of paper travelling between home and school, if you need to inform the teacher of anything you may write it in your child's diary and they can show it to the teacher. You may also telephone the school office and inform Mrs McCluskey, our school secretary, who will get the message to your child's teacher in the normal way or email Mrs McCluskey (jmcccluskey773@c2kni.net) who will in turn forward the required information to the relevant class teacher/s. Teachers can't respond during the day to emails or messages from parents via Google Classroom as they are now teaching a class full-time.

Visitors

Currently only essential visitors are allowed onsite.

Following detailed Risk Assessments, the EA are introducing the music tutors back into schools for core tuition to those pupils who had lessons last year. New pupils and the musical pathways programme are still being considered by EA. The core tuition lessons will begin this Friday.

PTA

We have been extremely fortunate to have had a fantastic PTA, who raise much needed funds for school. Unfortunately, we will be losing some key members of our PTA, as their children have left Orchard County. We want to say a special thanks to those parents for their dedication to raising funds for our school and for providing great activities for the children. Last year's PTA were unable to complete their planned programme of events due to school closing.

This year, we will require parents with creative ideas to raise funds during the pandemic. We have already had some interest from our new parents and I would encourage as many parents as possible to join the PTA. It is a great way to connect with other parents and a real chance for you to make a difference to your child's education.

We hope to hold our **PTA Annual General Meeting via Zoom on Thursday 22nd October at 7pm.**

If you are interested in joining PTA or are a current member please email myself jmcmillan521@c2kni.net and I will then send you a link via email for the Zoom meeting. We need to elect a chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary and treasurer. If you would be interested in taking on one of these roles, please indicate that also in your email.

We would still like to fundraise to continue to replace our whiteboards with interactive panels. We would also love to fundraise for an outdoor classroom.

Cash for Clobber

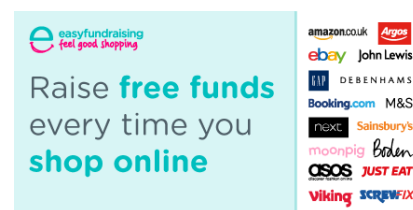
We have a clothing bank to the left of the main school. Please continue to use this to put in bags of clothing/textiles that you no longer need. The PTA then receives a cheque following collections.

Easy Fundraising

Please consider raising funds for the school via the PTA's Easy Fundraising online service. Shopping doesn't cost you a penny more, but as you make purchases online, shops make a donation to the PTA. All you do is register and start shopping (it's good to select the "Donation Reminder" option). Please give it a go and encourage your friends and family to do so too - it is free money to benefit the children of Orchard County Primary School and Nursery! A great time to register before you start your Christmas shopping. Please register by clicking the link below:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/orchardcountyprimaryschoolpta/>

Once you have joined, the next time you shop online, start at [easyfundraising.org.uk](https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) and log in. If you shop with your phone or tablet you can download the [easyfundraising app](#).



Remote Learning

We received some very positive comments from parents about the provision made for our children during lockdown. If this situation should happen again or an individual child, family or class has to self-isolate, the class teacher will use Google Classroom again to assign tasks/lessons and communicate with pupils.

All children from P1-P7 should be logged on and familiar with Google Classroom. Many teachers are using this currently as a means of communication and for assigning homeworks.

If anyone is already thinking of Christmas presents, ensuring your child has a laptop or iPad and access to a printer may be more beneficial than the latest PlayStation, X box or Nintendo. I'm sure Santa will see the need this year.

Flu vaccination- Thursday 15th October

Letters have been issued and only those pupils who have returned a signed consent form will be given the flu vaccine. The Chief Medical Officer, Dr Michael McBride is promoting the uptake of the flu vaccine this year.

Staff Sickness

Mrs McCormack, Mrs Erwin and Mrs Boyd are currently off ill, we continue to send them our best wishes for a speedy recovery and hope that they will be back again at school soon.

Macmillan Coffee Morning

Thank you so much to all our pupils, parents, staff and friends for all the donations for Macmillan Cancer Support. Our community coffee morning is usually an event P7 really look forward to. Due to Covid-19 it was not possible to hold our normal event and invite the community into school but P7 still continued to plan and organise a fun day for each class. We had our own coffee morning (juice, buns & cake) in our 'bubbles' and line dancing on the MUGA. The pupils participated in games and we were very grateful for the fantastic prizes donated by Mrs Blair. A big thank you also to Miss Leonard and P7 who led the line dancing. An amazing amount of **£1040** was raised. Well done everyone, Macmillan Cancer Support will really appreciate your very generous donations.



If you are aware of any pupils looking for a place in P1-P7 at Orchard County this year, please email or telephone school. We have places available due to some families relocating.

Thank you once again for your support at the start of this difficult year. Our aim is to make school as normal and as safe as possible for the whole school community, this only happens with good teamwork. If you have any queries, suggestions or require any further information please contact school.

J McMillan

Principal

Positions of Responsibility

Congratulations to all our pupils who received positions of responsibility.

	Annaghmore	Ardrress	Argory	Tullyroan
House Captains	Grace Dilly Rachel Hamilton	Rachel Troughton Ethan Gray	Noah Kinghan Lily Neill	Carla Blair Eli Cheyne
Digital Leader	P2/3 Elsie Moore Eli Boyce	P4/5 Mary Jane Dilly Tom Ellis	P5/6 Lily-May Telford Victoria Bell	P6/7 Hannah MacLeod Annabelle Boyce
School Council		Penny McConnell Kelsey Gillespie	James Farquhar Eden Hendron	Maisie Moore Kenzie McNally
Eco Warriors		Katie Williamson Tom Harty	Kathryn Carson Sawyer Smith	Thomas Manton Sophie Oliver
Helpers				Jackson Neill Freddie Thompson Simon Marsh Jake Brown Ben Carson
Librarians				Emily McCombe Kathryn Kane Madison Irwin Nathan Murray Carys Allen