

November Newsletter

As we continue to live through very strange times, the staff endeavour to make school as safe and as normal an experience as possible, for our pupils. Children have missed out on so many lovely experiences at home and in school, due to the pandemic. As we start to think of Christmas we want to try to make it as happy a time as possible in school and have arranged some special days.

COVID 19 Reminders



- We will maintain our staggered arrival and departure times with all pupils being left at the back gate or the gate in front of the nursery. It is important that these times are adhered to, to keep everyone safe. Nursery pupils can still be brought to and collected from the nursery door.
- Please remember social distancing (2m) and wear a **face mask** at drop off and collection times.
- 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.
- If your child is unwell please keep them at home and seek medical advice if required.
- If you suspect your child has Covid-19 symptoms, please book a test online.
- Please follow all PHA guidance on self-isolating.
- In the event of a school or class/bubble closure due to a positive case, work will be provided daily through Google Classroom for those who are well enough to complete it.
- Work will also be placed on Google Classroom for those individual pupils who have been advised to self-isolate by the PHA.
- If a parent chooses to keep their child at home and they are not ill or have not been told to isolate by the PHA or a medical professional, then this absence is recorded as unauthorised.
- Currently only essential visitors are allowed into the school building.
- Remind your children to use good respiratory hygiene and wash hands regularly.

Symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- **A high temperature/fever**
- **A new continuous cough**
- **Anosmia:** the loss or change in your normal sense of smell or taste.

Look out for other changes in your child's health such as headaches, muscle pain or nausea. These too could be symptoms. Please keep your child at home and seek medical advice.

School Photos

You have received your child's photograph proof from OPUS. All orders are done online, via the OPUS website. Enter the code and view and order your photos. If ordered within two weeks these photos will be delivered to school free of charge.

Parent/Teacher Consultations - Monday 23rd - Friday 27th November (1.15 - 4pm)

Due to the extended half term break, our parent/teacher interviews did not take place. We have rescheduled these to take place week beginning 23rd Nov.

The same arrangements and timetable that was planned for October, will be followed. The staff will put your new date and time in your child's diary or homework folder. If this appointment for your telephone call is not suitable please email your child's teacher to change your date/time. 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 calls on the same afternoon, where possible.

To ensure the staff can get through the necessary telephone calls throughout that week all children will be finishing, after lunch, at an earlier time, everyday that week.

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)

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





During the week the children will be involved in various activities to promote anti-bullying week. Bullying has a long lasting effect on those who experience and witness it. But by channelling our collective power, through shared efforts and shared ambitions, we can reduce bullying together. As part of Anti-Bullying Week 2020, we are going to have an **Odd Socks Day** on Monday 16th November for the first time! Odd Socks Day is an opportunity to encourage people to express themselves and celebrate their individuality and what makes us all unique! There is no pressure to wear the latest fashion or for parents to buy expensive costumes. All you have to do to take part is wear odd socks to school (and remember your shoes), it couldn't be simpler!



Elf Day Friday 4th December

We plan to have a fun 'Elf Day' in school on Friday 4th December. Children may come to school in an elf hat, costume, jumper, jingly shoes, pointy ears or just red/green clothing. We will all be dressing up to raise money for people affected by dementia. I'm sure we all know someone who has been affected. This year has been anything but ordinary and people with dementia need our support now more than ever. Families affected by dementia have been devastated by the coronavirus crisis - with 4 in 5 people's symptoms deteriorating from being cut off from loved ones and the support networks they rely on. We would ask that pupils bring in a donation on Elf Day and we will pass this on to the Alzheimer's society, who support dementia patients.

Last year our school choir visited two residential care homes to entertain residents who had dementia. Due to the pandemic, this will not be possible this year but we still want to remember those who are affected by this disease. We want to help the children understand more about this illness but still have a fun and enjoyable day.

Revised Holiday List

Our planned holiday list has been changed following the extended half term break. The amended list is available to view on the school website.

School Pens

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



The Engage Programme

This Engage programme has started. Some pupils are receiving additional support in the areas of literacy, numeracy and wellbeing. The aim of the programme is to limit any long-term impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on educational standards. Your child's teacher will discuss this with you during their parent/teacher consultation if your child is involved in this programme.

Uniform

As the weather gets colder, we are becoming more aware that the temperatures in the classrooms are lower than usual, due to the windows and doors being open for ventilation. The heating is on as usual but as the radiators are under the windows, most heat is escaping out of the window. DE recommended that all classrooms should be well ventilated.

We would encourage pupils to wear thermals or under armour garments under their trousers and shirts/blouses and wear tights. Pupils may also bring an extra layer to put over their school uniform. This can be the school hoodie or a **plain navy** hoodie or fleece, these will be more comfortable than trying to work wearing a coat. 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 also be **plain navy**.

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 check the menu on the school website and place all dinner money in an envelope clearly labelled with the days your child wishes to take dinner and send to school on a Monday morning. Please also ensure that your child knows whether they are taking a packed lunch or a dinner each day.

We would like to wish Mrs L Corrigan well as she retires from her role in the school kitchen. We want to thank her for serving the children each day and I know the children will really miss her. Thankfully Mrs Corrigan is not retiring from her role as our school Building Supervisor.

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

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) 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.

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.

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.

PTA-Annual General Meeting via Zoom on Thursday 3rd December at 7pm.

As our last planned meeting did not happen due to the school closure, we hope to hold our AGM on Thursday 3rd December at 7pm via Zoom.

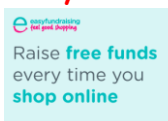
If you are interested in joining PTA or are a current member and wish to attend the meeting, please email myself jmcmillan521@c2kni.net and I will then send you a link via email for the Zoom meeting. We need to elect a chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary and treasurer. If you would be interested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

We would still like to fundraise to continue to replace all our whiteboards with interactive panels. We would also love to fundraise for an outdoor classroom. So if you have any fundraising ideas that we could do during this unusual year, please get in touch.

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 (it's good to select the "Donation Reminder" option) and start shopping. 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! Please register by clicking the link below: <https://www.easypundraising.org.uk/causes/orchardcountyprimaryschoolpta/>



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

Staff

We are delighted that Mrs Erwin is back teaching P2/3 following a period of illness. Mrs McCormack and Mrs Boyd are still 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.

I am currently self-isolating following PHA advice as I have been in contact with positive Covid cases but thankfully I have tested negative. I am working from home, so if you have a query or concern please email me. If you need to speak to someone urgently in school, please contact either of our senior managers, Mrs Davidson or Mrs Neill. I hope to return to school later this week.

Congratulations

We wish to pass on our congratulations and best wishes to Mr & Mrs Neill as they look forward to welcoming a new addition to their family. Mrs Neill, our P4/5 teacher, is expecting her second child in February and will be starting her maternity leave in January. Due to Covid-19 and recommendations by medical professionals, Mrs Neill will be withdrawing from the classroom from Monday 23rd November. She will continue working from home and in school, outside of the classroom during December. We wish her well and look forward to some exciting news in February.

Miss Barnes, our two day P6/7 teacher will be teaching P4/5 on Monday, Tuesday and Friday and Miss Bothwell will be teaching P4/5 on a Wednesday and Thursday. The children know these two ladies and I know they will do a great job teaching P4/5. Miss Barnes covered Mrs Neill's last maternity leave, so she is very familiar with the P4/5 curriculum. Mrs Neill has already started the well planned hand over. Mrs Neill will be doing the parent teacher interviews during the week beginning 23rd November.

Miss Bothwell will also be covering P2/3 on a Friday from 27th November until Mrs McCormack returns and she will continue with the Engage programme from term 2.

Thank you all for your continued support throughout this difficult time. If you have any queries, suggestions or require any further information please contact school by telephone or email the staff.

J McMillan

Principal