



# PORTSTEWART PRIMARY SCHOOL and NURSERY UNIT

Principal: Mrs K. Taylor, B.Ed, PQH (NI)  
Telephone: (028) 7083 2194 (School direct line)  
Email: ktaylor357@c2kni.net



22-24 Central Avenue  
Portstewart  
Co. Londonderry  
BT55 7BT

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## **PARENT UPDATE (Please retain for information)**

### **FULL RETURN TO SCHOOL ON MONDAY 22<sup>ND</sup> MARCH 2021**

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian,

As you are aware, the Northern Ireland Executive, has recently announced that all pupils will return to school on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> March. I am delighted that we will be welcoming back all our pupils as we have really missed them. It is vitally important that children return to school to engage in face to face teaching and enjoy the company of their peers. This letter is to give you all the information you need to know in relation to the full reopening of school, much of which is the same as was in place before Christmas. Here goes....

#### **Key information:**

- All children in Nursery to Primary 7 should attend school from Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021.
- All previous Covid-19 risk mitigation measures remain in place for the safety of our whole school community.
- Children will continue to have staggered start and finish times (outlined further on the next page).
- Stepping Stones afterschool club is currently in operation from 2pm to 5.45pm each day. To book a place please contact Stepping Stones directly on 02870833200.

#### **Safety and Hygiene**

The wellbeing and safety of everyone is of the upmost importance. Pupils will be kept within their class bubbles. Children will be taught and supervised in good handwashing routines. Upon entry to school all children will wash or sanitise their hands. This process will be repeated at various points of the day

**To keep school a safe environment for everyone NO child or adult should attend school if they have any of the following symptoms:**

- A new cough
- A temperature
- A loss of taste or smell

#### **Unwell children**

It is vitally important that parents keep children home from school if they are experiencing any symptom of Covid-19 e.g. a new continuous cough, a temperature or a loss of taste or smell. Children who are ill or unwell should not be sent to school. If your child requires Calpol first thing in the morning, we request that you do not send your child to school as often by mid-morning the effects of the Calpol wear off.

### **Staggered start and finish times**

Children will continue to have staggered start and finish times. The times and designated doors for entrance and exit are exactly the same as before the Christmas holidays. See the table below for details:

<b>Year group</b>	<b>Start time</b>	<b>Finish time</b>	<b>Door for entrance and exit</b>
Nursery	8.45am	1.15pm	Nursery main front door
Primary 1	8.50am	1.55pm	Junior playground P1 door
Primary 2	8.45am	1.50pm	Queenora door
Primary 3	8.50am	1.55pm (and 2.55pm on Thursday's)	Fire door at Primary 3 classroom
Primary 4	8.55am	3.00pm	Door into canteen via Junior playground
Primary 5	8.50am	2.55pm	Door under archway near polytunnel
Primary 6 Mrs Smyth / Miss Anderson	8.55am	3.00pm	Main front door
Primary 6 Mrs Baillie / Miss Blackford	8.55am	3.00pm	KS2 playground door
Primary 7	8.45am	2.50pm	Door beside office in Junior playground

**On Friday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021 we will be finishing for our Easter holidays. As usual, we will be finishing on a half day but with staggered times as outlined below:**

#### **Friday 26<sup>th</sup> March finish times:**

Nursery - 11.50am  
Primary 1 - 11.55am  
Primary 2 - 11.55am  
Primary 3 - 12 noon  
Primary 4 - 12 noon  
Primary 5 - 11.55am  
Primary 6 S/A - 12 noon  
Primary 6 B - 12 noon  
Primary 7 - 11.55am

### **Important information for parents about drop off and collection times:**

- It is important that pupils do not arrive before their allocated time as there will be no adult supervision outdoors in the morning. Frequently Mrs Taylor will be out in the playground before school starts to welcome pupils but there will be no direct adult supervision for each designated door.
- If possible, only 1 parent/carer should accompany their child(ren) to the designated drop off point whilst maintaining the recommended 2 metres social distancing at all times.
- If your child arrives late to school, and the designated door is closed, pupils should proceed to enter school via the main front door. Mrs Taylor or Mrs Thompson will accompany the pupil to their class and take note of their reason for arriving at school late.
- We would encourage parents to wear a face mask or face covering whilst in the school grounds (if you are not exempt from doing so).
- Parents should not congregate outside the school building but should maintain the advised social distancing measurement away from other parents or adults.
- We recommend that those parent/carers arriving by car aim to park further away from school and walk with your child(ren) so they are maintaining social distancing from others. Extra car parking is available at Old Coach Rd, Convention Avenue, Amici etc.
- Where a taxi is required, pupils are encouraged to wear face coverings if possible.

### **Can parents come into the school building?**

- The guidance states that parents will not be permitted into the school building.
- Any parent who wishes to enter the school building to speak to a member of staff should book an appointment by contacting the office in advance. Parents who come into the school building must fill in a COVID track and trace form and wear a face covering (if they are not exempt) when attending a prearranged appointment.
- If it is necessary to contact a member of staff during the school day this should be done by contacting the school office, providing a reason for your call and the appropriate member of staff will get back to you as soon as practically possible. Please use this method as opposed to a Seesaw message or Facebook message as teachers are busy teaching and are unable to read or respond to messages.

### **What days will my child have Physical Education?**

- It is important that our pupils continue to have Physical Education lessons. On days that your child has PE lessons pupils should come to school wearing their school jumper and polo shirt and also wear plain navy, black or grey tracksuit bottoms and trainers. This is so pupils will not need to get changed for PE in school. On the days that pupils are not participating in PE it is expected that pupils will wear full school uniform with black school shoes.

#### **PE days for each class:**

Nursery - Outdoor play/physical movement activities each day (wearing their normal Nursery uniform)

Primary 1 - PE on a Monday and a Friday

Primary 2 - PE on a Wednesday and a Friday

Primary 3 - PE on a Tuesday and a Thursday

Primary 4 - PE on a Tuesday and a Friday

Primary 5 - PE on a Monday and a Wednesday

Primary 6 (Mrs Baillie/Miss Blackford's class) - PE on a Tuesday and a Thursday

Primary 6 (Mrs Smyth/Miss Anderson's class) - PE on a Monday and Friday

Primary 7 - PE on a Wednesday and a Friday

### **My child has grown out of part of their school uniform, what should I do?**

- Children should attend school wearing their full school uniform as much as possible. If you require additional uniform, however, have been unable to purchase them due to the shops being closed then please have your child come to school in clothing as close to school uniform colour as possible.
- Our uniform supplier (McKenzie Menswear) is available to complete orders at the moment if you contact them on 02870835744. You can arrange to collect the pieces of uniform from the shop directly.

### **How will homework work?**

- All pupils from Nursery to Primary 7 will be continuing to use Seesaw to access home learning tasks.
- On the week beginning 22<sup>nd</sup> March children will be given reading each evening to complete. After the Easter holidays all classes in the primary school will recommence written homework.

### **My child is anxious about returning to school, what should I do?**

- Contact school and let us know any concerns or worries your child has.

### **Will there be after school clubs in operation?**

- Unfortunately, due to government instruction, we are unable to operate afterschool clubs at this time. This will be kept under review.

### **Will Stepping Stones afterschool provision run?**

- Yes, in line with the Department of Education's guidance Stepping Stones afterschool provision is currently running. Each daily group will act as a bubble and Stepping Stones will be implementing their own risk assessment measures. Please contact Stepping Stones directly if you have any queries about afterschool provision. Stepping Stones afterschool club is currently in operation from 2pm to 5.45pm each day. To book a place please contact Stepping Stones directly on 02870833200.

### **What are the school dinners for school dinners for the week beginning 22<sup>nd</sup> March?**

- Our canteen will continue to provide hot lunches. The issue with the main oven and fans this week has now been fixed. School lunches cost £2.60 per day for pupils in the primary school and £2.50 for pupils in the Nursery Unit. We encourage all parents, including those entitled to Free School Meals, to use ParentPay our cashless system to book and pay for school dinners. Use the website below to pay and book for dinners online ([www.parentpay.com](http://www.parentpay.com)).

#### **Dinner menu for week beginning 22<sup>nd</sup> March:**

##### **Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> March**

Steak burger in bap, sweetcorn, chips  
Fresh fruit & plain cookie

##### **Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March**

Chicken curry, boiled rice, naan bread & baton carrots  
Sponge & Custard, Fruit

##### **Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> March**

Fish fingers, beans or mushy peas & mashed potato  
Fresh fruit & yoghurt

##### **Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> March**

Roast pork, diced turnip, cauliflower, mashed potato, gravy  
Fresh fruit & frozen yoghurt

##### **Friday 26<sup>th</sup> March**

No dinner due to early closure for Easter holidays

**I have heard that lateral flow tests will be available for staff, how will this work?**

- The Department of Education has sent a letter to say that after Easter a further mitigation available as part of schools return is regular testing of all staff in primary schools who do not have symptoms of COVID-19. Commencing after the Easter break, the programme will expand to include all staff in primary schools. **As far as we are aware there are NO plans to offer lateral flow tests for pupils of nursery or primary school age. This is only a further mitigation for staff and it is completely voluntary.**
- All testing will be voluntary, for staff. The tests will be conducted twice a week, 3-4 days apart. We expect further guidance to be issued soon to staff from the Department of Education.

**How do I report that my child is absent from school?**

- If your child is absent from school please contact the main school office on 02870832194 or email [ktaylor357@c2kni.net](mailto:ktaylor357@c2kni.net). Please do not use Seesaw to report an absence as the school office does not have access to Seesaw.

**When do pupils return from the Easter holidays?**

- On Friday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021 we will be finishing for our Easter holidays. As usual, we will be finishing on a half day but with staggered times (as outlined previously in the letter).
- All pupils will return to school on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

Thank you very much for taking the time to refresh your memory of all out Covid-19 mitigation measures.

It is really encouraging that the nationwide outlook on Covid-19 is really promising, with low infection rates and an increase in the numbers vaccinated, however we do not want to become complacent. I want our school to remain open to all pupils without the need to close class bubbles. Continue to work with us, implementing the measures as outlined above, and I am confident we can have a really positive Summer Term and end to this school year.

Many thanks to all our parents, grandparents and carers for your tremendous efforts to support your child's remote learning whilst school has been closed to the majority of pupils. Thank you for your continued support and we look forward to welcoming everyone back to school.

Yours faithfully,



Mrs K Taylor  
Principal