

# Kirkistown Primary School Newsletter

November & December 2019



## Harvest Donations

A sincere thank you to the wider school community for your kind donations as part of our harvest thanksgiving. The donations were collected on Wednesday 16 October and will already have been put to great use, helping individuals and families in great need.

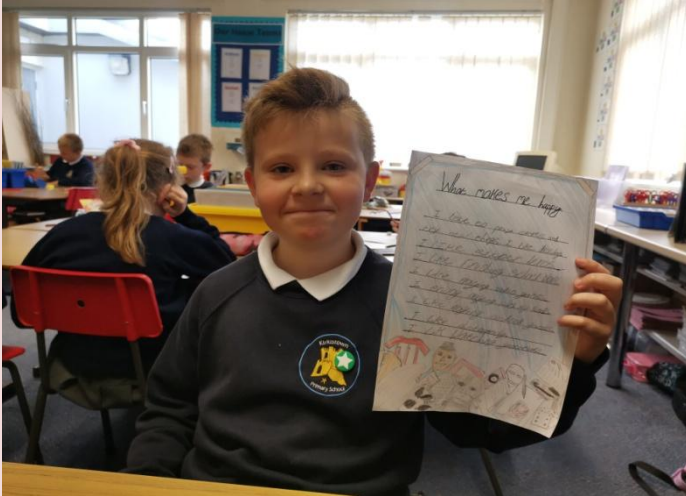
It is very important that our children recognise the good fortune in their lives and understand how they can help others less fortunate than themselves. Thank you kindly for playing a very important role in this.





# World Mental Health Day

On Thursday 10 October, each of our classes took part in activities designed to help children understand their feelings and to think positively about themselves. From relaxation techniques to thinking about their personal qualities, the children were encouraged to reflect upon what makes them happy and how to manage stress.



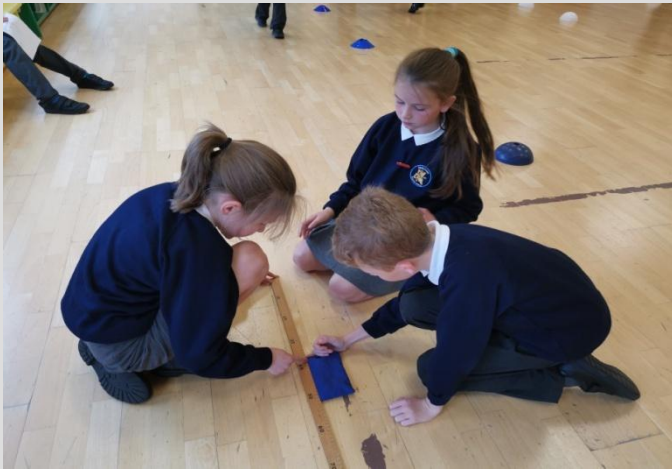
## Artist Visit

Our Primary 1 and 2 learners were very fortunate to be joined by a former pupil and one of our parent population, Mrs Miles, for an art session recently. Mrs Miles, an artist and jewellery maker, worked with the children to create hand casts as part of a mini-project on identity. The session featured in the Newtownards Chronicle and on behalf of the children, Mrs Harbinson and school, I would very much like to thank Mrs Miles for her time. We are hopeful of making a display of the fantastic artwork created by the children.



# Numeracy Week

Children in all classes took part in a number of practical activities designed to promote numeracy skills during the week beginning Monday 14 October. The influence of numeracy and application of numeracy skills across other subjects was evident as children engaged in a host of activities including sport. Our thanks to Miss Taggart for leading on this initiative.



LI - To estimate distance and measure it accurately  
Beanbag Shot Putt

House: Coys

Name	Estimated Throw Distance	Measured Throw Distance	Photo
Lydia	6.10m	7.74m	
Zach	9.84m	10.23m	
Lara	5.10m		
Danish			
Helen			



## Online safety Guides

This month's advice leaflet is another look at Fortnite, which continues to be popular with children in our school. The guide is found at the back of this newsletter after the calendar dates.



# Class Assemblies

Congratulations to all four classes for completing their Autumn Term class assemblies. As the Principal, I take great pride in watching our children present their learning to family, friends and members of our wider school community. Developing the confidence to speak loudly, clearly and with confidence in front of an audience is an important life skill and I'm delighted to see all our classes work hard on developing this skill set.

Our Friday assemblies begin at **9:10am** and continue to be open to families who wish to celebrate the success of our children with us. If you would like to join us, please make your way to the assembly hall and help yourself to one of the seats available at the back of the hall. Assemblies should last approximately 15 minutes, with class assemblies taking a little bit longer. Remaining class assembly dates are detailed below.

## Golden Raffle Winners

Congratulations to our first Golden Raffle Winners! Children who manage their choices consistently well in school are automatically entered into our half termly golden raffle with a winner being drawn from Foundation & Key Stage 1 and a separate winner being drawn from Key Stage 2. Our inaugural winners were recipients of IMC Cinema vouchers. Well done to all the children who had their name in the hat for managing to follow our 6 Golden Rules this half term. We will have another Golden Raffle just before Christmas!



## Winning House Team

Congratulations to Ardkeen House who were our first winners of the half termly free non-uniform day! Children compete for house points by making good choices, working hard and showing fantastic manners. The idea of a free non-uniform day was proposed by our School Council last year. Children took their non-uniform day on Thursday 24 October 2019. Our next free non-uniform day will be shortly before Christmas.

## Friendship Week

'Change starts with us' was the focus for our 'Friendship Week' from Monday 11 November 2019 – Friday 15 November 2019. Children discussed the qualities of a good friend and took part in a whole school assembly where they shared some of their learning around this important area. Through examining the importance of friendship, we reinforced the part that our children play in making everyone feel cared for and part of our school community.



## Pantomime Visit

You will have received a letter regarding our traditional Pantomime Visit on Thursday 12 December 2019. This year, the children will watch Beauty and the Beast at the Grand Opera House in Belfast. Coach travel will once more be provided by the generosity of our wonderful PTFA. Children should be dropped off at Trinity Presbyterian Church, Cloughey at 10:20am on 12 December and collected from the public car park opposite Kirkistown Castle Golf Club at 5:30pm.





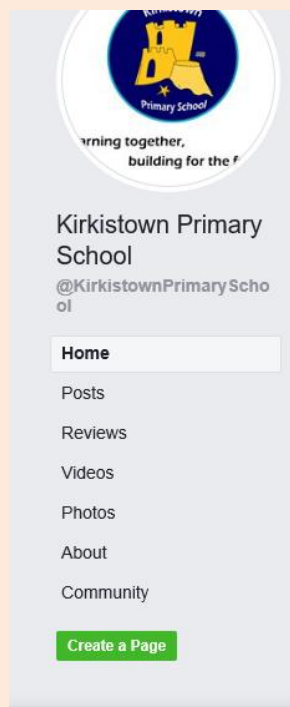
# Children In Need

A non-uniform day was held in school on Friday November 2019 with children coming with 'crazy hair' and 'odd socks'. A total of £190.51 was raised for Children in Need. Thank you to our school community for their continued generosity.



# Facebook Page

I'm delighted to inform you that we have launched our own Facebook page to help promote the school. Through the page, we hope to keep you more up to date with school life and the learning take place in our classrooms. A number of changes on our website will start to be instituted over the coming weeks also. Thank you for your patience regarding this in the meantime.



<https://www.facebook.com/KirkistownPrimarySchool>

## Netball Taster

Betty Wilson (Everybody Active) very kindly dropped in to host 2 netball taster sessions in November- one for Key Stage 1 children and another for Key Stage 2 children. Children had a brilliant time getting to grips with ball handling skills, skim passing and learning the fundamental rules of netball. Betty is hoping to return to Kirkistown after Christmas to run an after-school netball club at a cost of £1 per session. Many children have shown an interest and we are hoping the club proves popular.





# Girls Football Tournament

Congratulations to our girls football team who finished runners up in their football tournament at the Blair Mayne Wellbeing Centre in Newtownards on 20 November 2019. The girls played a number of games throughout the morning and early afternoon, conceding only 3 goals all day! Perhaps the Tottenham Hotspur defence could learn valuable tips from watching our fantastic girls. Thank you the families, friends and to Miss Taggart for facilitating all the arrangements to allow the girls to access this wonderful opportunity.



## Christmas Nativity / Carol Service

Children in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 will perform 'Everyone loves a baby' on the following dates this year:

**Tuesday 17 December @ 1pm**

**Wednesday 18 December @ 6:30pm**

(Children should arrive in school at 6pm)

Key Stage 2 children will take part in their traditional Carol Service as outlined below

**Tuesday 17 December @ 2pm**

**Wednesday 18 December @ 7pm**

(Children should arrive in school at 6:30pm)





# School Disco

Thank you to our wonderful PTFA for organising our recent school disco. The children had a wonderful time and were great sports. A vast number of great dancers were spotted- including a couple of staff members.



# Asda Foundation

Our PTFA appear to be currently in second place in the current round of voting for charities at Asda, Newtownards. Please remember to vote for Kirkistown when shopping at Asda by requesting and placing your tokens into our slot!





## Open Day

We look forward to opening our doors to the wider community at our upcoming **Open Day** and **Christmas Fair** on Wednesday 04 December 2019.

Visitors to our open day will be free to visit our classrooms and to speak with our children, our staff and the Principal. Refreshments will be provided courtesy of our supportive governors. We're confident you'll be impressed with the community feeling in our school.

## Christmas Fair & Cloughey Christmas Lights

As the dark nights have arrived, can I please ask parents to take extra caution with supervising children who attend the Christmas Fair and the switching on of the Cloughey Christmas Tree Lights. While we want children to have a great time visiting the stalls and our wonderful Grotto, their safety at all times is of paramount importance. The Christmas Lights will be switched on at the conclusion of our Christmas Fair at 7:30pm. Our school choir will perform a number of songs at this event.



**Open Day**  
**Wednesday 4th December**  
**10 - 11.30 am**  
Come and look around the school and  
meet children & staff  
Refreshments available



**Kirkistown Primary  
School**

**Christmas Fair**  
**Wednesday 4th December**  
**5.30 - 7.30**  
All very welcome  
Festive refreshments & School Choir







## Shared Education Ice Breaker Sessions

To kickstart our Shared Education events for this academic year, P3 and P4 children from Kirkistown Primary School and St Patrick's, Ballygalget met last week to participate in some fantastic Christmas Arts and crafts in the Montgomery Hall.



P5, P6 and P7 meanwhile attended St Patrick's, Ballygalget for a song rehearsal before moving on to a morning of multi-sports activity at the Portaferry Sports Centre. Children took part in a range of sports and fitness activities before winding down with a yoga and mindfulness session, returning to school feeling refreshed.



# Diary dates Red font denotes new dates added since last newsletter

Term dates for the 2019-2020 academic year can be accessed via a document at the bottom of the following page: <https://www.kirkistownprimaryschool.com/parents-430717.html>

Date	Details
Wed 04 Dec	School Christmas Fair (5:30pm – 7:30pm) Cloughey Christmas Tree Lights Switch On (7:30pm)
Fri 06 Dec	School Choir to meet the Mayor at 4pm then perform on the Carol Ship at 4:45pm
Wed 11 Dec	School Choir to attend Cloughey Seniors Afternoon Tea (1pm onwards)
Thu 12 Dec	Whole School Panto trip- Children to be dropped off at Trinity Presbyterian Church (Cloughey) at 10:20am and picked up from the public car park opposite Kirkistown Castle Golf Club at 5:30pm.
Tue 17 Dec	Nativity Performance: 1pm Carol Service: 2pm (Both in the Assembly Hall)
Wed 18 Dec	Evening Nativity Performance: 6:30pm Evening Carol Service: 7:00pm (Both in the Assembly Hall) <b>Children to be in school for 6pm.</b>
Thu 19 Dec	Free non-uniform day for the winning house this half term
Fri 20 Dec	School Finishes for Christmas School Choir to attend Church Service at Trinity Presbyterian Church 7:15pm – 8:30pm
Mon 06 Jan	School Reopens
Thu 09 Jan	P6 & P7 to visit St Patrick's, Ballygalget to participate in Football Coaching led by IFA coaches
Thu 16 Jan	P6 & P7 to be joined by children from St Patrick's, Ballygalget to participate in Football Coaching led by IFA coaches
Thu 23 Jan	1pm P6&P7 to Ballgalget (IFA)
Mon 27 Jan	P6 & P7 Hive Hackers Coding Programme commences
Thu 30 Jan	P6 & P7 to be joined by children from St Patrick's, Ballygalget to participate in Football Coaching led by IFA coaches



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Date	Details
Mon 03 Feb	AutismNI Superhero Week-
Thu 06 Feb	P6 & P7 to visit St Patrick's, Ballygalget to participate in Football Coaching led by IFA coaches
Mon 10 Feb – Thu 13 Feb	Parent Interviews 1:15pm onwards School Closes at 12:45pm
Fri 14 Feb	School Finishes at 1pm for Half Term Non-Uniform day with £1 donation to school fund
Mon 24 Feb	School reopens
Thu 27 Feb	P6 & P7 to be joined by children from St Patrick's, Ballygalget to participate in Football Coaching led by IFA coaches
Thu 05 Mar	World Book Day
Fri 06 Mar	P3 and P4 Class Assembly
Fri 13 Mar	Reception / P1 and P2 Class Assembly
Fri 20 Mar	P6 & P7 Class Assembly
Fri 27 Mar	P5 Class Assembly P6 & P7 Children to attend Hive Hackers Award Ceremony in Belfast (Time TBC)
Fri 03 Apr	School Closes for Easter
Mon 20 Apr	School Reopens First Day of Swimming for P4-P7
Wed 22 Apr	Visit from Swaziland Choir Kirkistown School Choir to perform at Trinity Presbyterian Church (7:30pm) with Swaziland Choir.





Fortnite: Chapter 2 has finally landed! With a whole host of new in-game features including a brand-new map, more water-based activities, upgraded character skins and a more streamlined arsenal of weapons, this Fortnite is promising to be the best yet. Almost all of the changes are cosmetic which means the concept of the game remains the same, with players still aiming to be the last man standing. Players will no doubt find the game much more enjoyable with so much more to explore. For parents and carers however, it pays to remain vigilant.

AGE RECOMMENDATION  
**13+**



## What parents need to know about

# FORTNITE

## CHAPTER

# 2

### BATTLE ROYALE

Battle Royale games have become very popular over the last couple of years, and most tend to follow a very similar setup. Taking Fortnite as an example, 100 players drop into a map, loot buildings for weapons and armour and attempt to beat all the other players to be crowned victor at the end. If you've ever seen the Hunger Games movies, you'll have an idea of what this entails. Each game can take up to 20 minutes (assuming you last to the end) and can be restarted relatively quickly once 100 free players have been found.

### IS FORTNITE ADDICTIVE?

Fortnite is at the forefront of gaming addiction discussions because it is so popular with young people. But whether it actually contributes to gaming addiction is up for debate. WHO (World Health Organisation) have classified gaming as a legitimate addiction, but this is not solely a concern with Fortnite. Signs of addiction can include irritability when not playing, lying about the amount of time played and a preoccupation with thoughts of the next gaming session. Realistically, it must be down to parents and carers to recognise these symptoms and act accordingly if they think they are developing.

### FREE TO PLAY... OR IS IT?

While Fortnite is technically free to play (in that you can download and play it without paying) it does come with the caveat that spending money on things like skins and emotes in-game is heavily pushed to players. The currency used in-game is called 'V-Bucks' and can be bought with real money through the game's online store. It's worth remembering that these purchases are absolutely not necessary, are cosmetic only and that V-Bucks can be earned in-game with enough play time.

### SEASONAL UPDATES

Every 10 weeks or so Fortnite is updated with a new season. This essentially adds new things like skins and emotes to the game, while also sometimes changing up the game map in interesting ways. These seasons are free to everybody and don't require additional money to play, though battle passes for each season can be bought with V-Bucks. A battle pass will typically allow a player to earn experience faster and gain fun in-game items by completing a host of daily challenges.

### CROSSPLAY IS AVAILABLE

One of the wonderful things about Fortnite is that it can be played cross-platform. This means that no matter what platform a person plays on (PC, PlayStation 4, Xbox One etc) they can play with friends who own the game on a different platform. To do this, an Epic Games account must first be created online (which is free) and then linked with your platform account. Doing this removes the age-old boundary of not being able to play together because you don't have the same console and opens up a whole new world of playing online with friends.

### IS FORTNITE VIOLENT?

Fortnite has been rated by the ESRB (Entertainment Software Ratings Board) as teen, as it contains cartoony violence and the weapons and acts depicted in the game are some way removed from their real life inspirations. Characters don't draw blood when shot and instead of dying, they are simply beamed up off the map. Naturally, players younger than the recommended age limit will want to play the game and that should be at the discretion of parents and carers.



## Top Tips For Parents

### BUYING V-BUCKS

As mentioned, Fortnite does contain in-game purchases and microtransactions in the form of V-Bucks which can be bought with real money. If you do decide to let your young one spend money in the game, be sure to delete your card information afterwards as it can be very easy to purchase more items at the press of a few buttons. It's important to set a limit on any purchases (as mentioned they are absolutely not necessary to play the game) and a suggestion would be capping the spending at around £50 - this is the normal retail price of a game

### GAMING WITH STRANGERS

Fortnite Battle Royale is an online game, and as such, there is a chance that young children could come into contact with strangers who are randomly placed into their groups in a game. It's difficult to predict what another person might say or do in a game, so it's a good idea for friends playing together, to be grouped together. The only real countermeasure to interacting with strangers offered by Fortnite is to turn off all mic communications, which can be done in the game's settings. Using outside chat apps, like Skype or Discord while playing, is a great way to make sure you know who you're talking to and that nobody else is listening in.

### LIMIT TIME, BUT BE FLEXIBLE

A game of Fortnite can last up to 20 minutes, so be flexible when it's time to put it away. The approach of 'one more game' as opposed to '10 more minutes' will stop any complaints that a match is still ongoing. Better still, play with your child and take it in turns; that way you're helping control the time played and can keep an eye on what they're experiencing.

### TALK TO OTHER PARENTS / CARERS

If you're concerned about play time or spending money in the game, talk to other parents and carers of your child's friends. If you approach as a collective, it will be easier to know when their friends are online and you don't have to worry about who they're playing with. It can also help curb expectations on spending money on battle passes and skins if you stick together.

### CAN DEVELOP SOME IMPORTANT SKILLS

It's often overlooked just how good gaming can be for young people. Fortnite encourages team play, quick and complex problem solving and communication; that's not to mention the lightning fast reflexes gamers can develop. While taking breaks to do other activities is of course important, there are benefits to screen time which might not be immediately obvious.

### PLAY THE GAME YOURSELF

There's no substitute for sitting down and playing the game yourself to learn all about it. Fortnite is available for free on almost anything you can imagine, even your smartphone, so there's never been a better time to get involved and see what all the fuss is about. You never know, you might even be able to impress your children when you show them your impressive Victory Royale tally!

## Meet our expert

Mark Foster has worked in the gaming industry for 5 years as a writer, editor and presenter. He is the current gaming editor of two of the biggest gaming news sites in the world, UNILAD Gaming and GAMINGible. Starting gaming from a young age with his siblings, he has a passion for understanding how games and tech work, but more importantly, how to make them safe and fun.



<https://www.theguardian.com/games/2018/mar/07/fortnite-battle-royale-parents-guide-video-game-multiplayer-shooter>, <https://www.psychguides.com/behavioral-disorders/video-game-addiction/>, <https://www.polygon.com/2018/3/23/17146848/cross-platform-crossplay-ps4-xbox-pc-switch-ios-mobile-enable-friends-compatible-matchmaking701E7d>, <https://www.esrb.org/ratings/34948/Fortnite/>