

Kirkistown Primary School Newsletter

March 2020



Key Stage 2 Morning Break Changes

Following consultation with parents and pupils, we will trial a change to the Key Stage 2 break during summer term.

Children in P5, P6 and P7 will have the entirety of their 20 minute morning break outside (weather permitting). This 20 minute period (10:20am-10:40am) will include snack and playtime with pupils taking their snack outside.

Due to these changes, we would ask pupils and parents not to be taking foods outside that will require a spoon or other form of cutlery to eat them. Like all schools, we warmly encourage children to eat fruit or vegetables as part of a healthy snack. Pieces of fruit would be ideal eg- apples, a banana, carrots, a pear. The snack itself shouldn't be overly large as children then eat lunch 90 minutes later.



Whole School Easter Meal

We are planning to host an Easter social dinner where staff, children and governors are invited to eat a meal together. This would be a lovely opportunity for us all to eat and spend some time together. School will be contacting our meal supplier this coming week to ascertain if a roast dinner could be provided on Wednesday 01 April would be viable. We would warmly encourage all our families to consider trying a school meal on this date as part of this special occasion.

Charlie's visit

We were delighted to be visited by Charlie (Tuesday 25th February) who popped along to give children safety tips on how to stay safe around other dogs. Charlie's owner, Michelle (Raise the woof) spoke to children about how dogs communicate through body language and how they interpret the body language of others around them.

Children were given a number of helpful tips when around dogs:

- 1) Always ask the owner if it's okay to pet the dog
- 2) Stand in front of the dog (never crouch) and let the dog sniff / lick your hand first
- 3) Stroke the dog gently under the chin
- 4) Wash your hands afterwards

Michelle also spoke to children about staying safe when they encounter stray dogs by:

- 1) Stop any game you're playing and stand still
- 2) Cross your arms over your chest and tuck your head down

Finally, children learned about picking up dog waste. We looked at 3 different types of bags that can be used to collect dog waste and how long it would take for them to biodegrade:

- 1) Standard plastic bag- 1000 years +
- 2) Biodegradable bag- 4 years or thereabouts
- 3) Compostable bag - Around 45 days

Children had the opportunity to put the theory into practice by stroking Charlie if they wished. We all learned a lot through this valuable session and are very grateful to Michelle and Charlie for their time.

<http://www.kirkistownprimaryschool.com/the-wider-community.html>



Forest Schools

P3 & P4 are involved in the exciting Forest Schools Project and will shortly undertake their lessons in the great outdoors! More news to follow!

Art From Trash Community Project

Children in P3 and P4 are taking part in a great recycling project, using materials that might ordinarily be discarded to create a wonderful piece of art to display in school. Funded by the County Down Rural Community Network (CDRCN) and organized with the help of the ever helpful and supportive Cloughey and District Community Association, the project has been led by Heather and Sally from the Community Art Project Arts Centre. The project will finish with a final session on Wednesday 11 March 2020.



Project with Kilcooley Women's Centre

P5, P6 & P7 were joined today by Lauren from the Kilcooley Women's Centre. Children made their own 'Family Tree' using the research they had carried out previously and listened to Carol and Robin (Cloughey District Community Association) recounting some of their experiences of growing up. Afterwards, children used their ICT skills to coach Carol and Robin to get the best out of their own research. Our thanks are extended to Lauren, Carol and Robin for joining us and making the experience all the richer for the children.



Class Assemblies- Change of Date

Dates for our Spring Term class assemblies have been arranged as follows:

Date	Class
Friday 06 March	P3 & P4
Friday 13 March	Reception P1 / P2
Friday 20 March	P6 & P7
Friday 03 April	P5

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.

H2O Project

In April 2020, children will take part in the H2O (Hope to others) Project, helping to raise funds to provide clean drinking water for children and adults in parts of Africa. The project will be launched by a visit from Missionary, Gary Armstrong, alongside Reverend Neil Stewart at our assembly on Monday 02 March 2020.

On Wednesday 22 April 2020, the Kirkistown Primary School community will receive a very special visit from the Hope & Glory Choir from Eswatini (Swaziland). The visiting choir will perform a number of songs for our children before the Kirkistown Choir perform a number of songs of their own. On the evening of Wednesday 22 April 2020, the Kirkistown Primary School choir (alongside choirs from other local schools) will participate in a special fundraising concert alongside the Hope & Glory Choir at Trinity Presbyterian Church, Cloughey.



New School Website

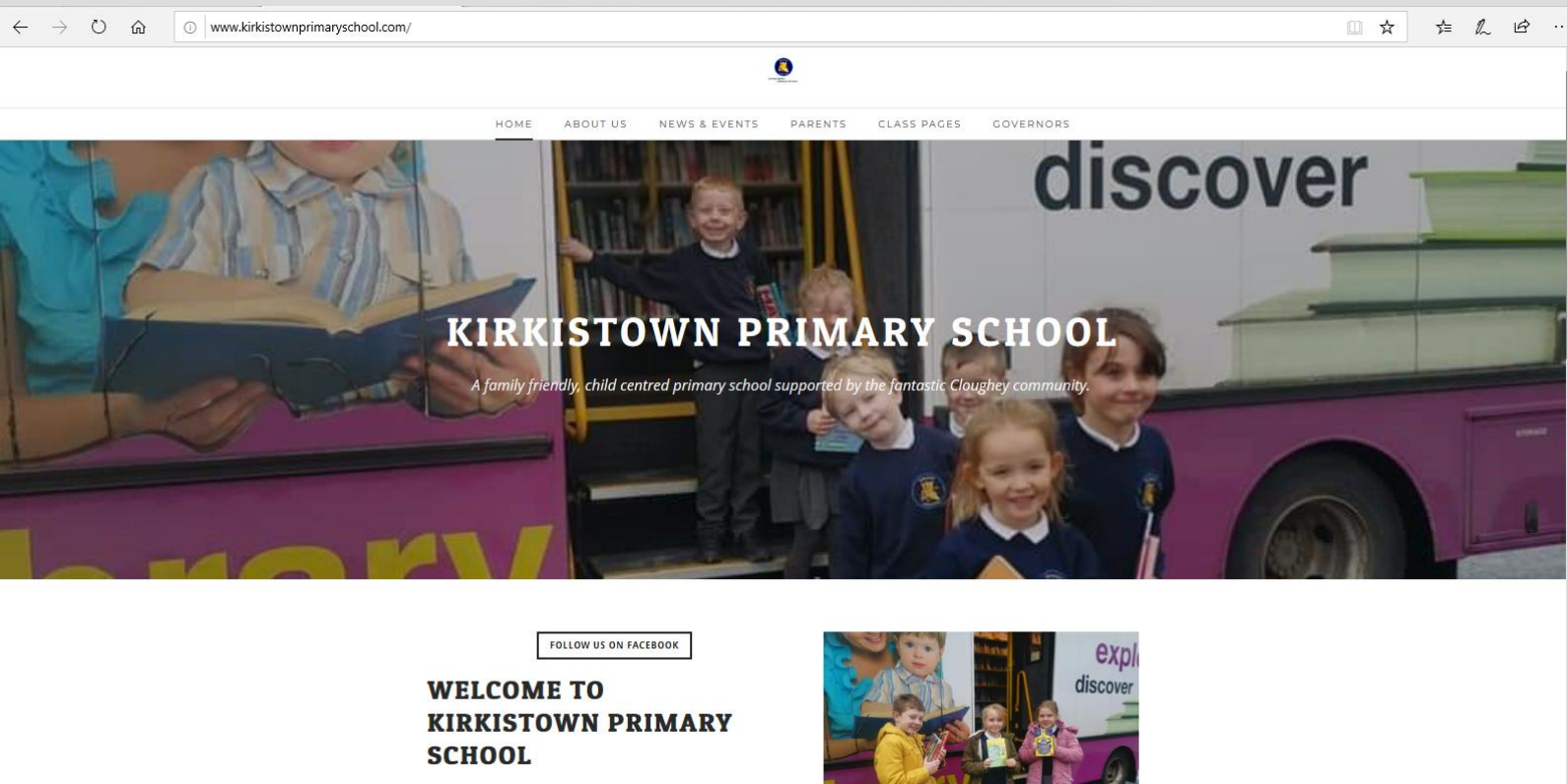
We've continued to add further tabs to our new school website over the last four weeks. Hopefully you'll find the new site to be full of useful information and helpful in keeping the local community informed of what is happening at our fantastic primary school. <http://www.kirkistownprimaryschool.com/>

To stay up to date with school life, I warmly recommend subscribing to our school **YouTube page**:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCk2P4BsM0Ti7umhkr8Cw1pA>

And following us on **Facebook**:

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



2020-2021 Term Dates Now Online

Term dates for the 2020-2021 school year are now available via our school website. Paper copies are available on request:

<http://www.kirkistownprimaryschool.com/term-dates--holidays.html>

Looking Further Ahead...

Cross Country @ Londonderry Park

As last year, we will send teams to the Ards & North Down Borough Cross Country Challenge. This year's event will take place on Friday 27 March.

Cloughey Cross Country Cup- **Change of Date**

Plans are underway to host our Shared Education Cross Country Races at Calhame pitch once more this year with a date of **Thursday 23 April 2020** confirmed. The inaugural event last year was a great success with almost every eligible child from each school taking part.

As last year, school would be very grateful for volunteers willing to help set up / dismantle the course, marshal or be a finish line official. Please contact Mr Graham if you would be willing to assist.



Swimming Lessons

Swimming lessons will begin on Monday 20 April 2020 for children in **P4-P7** continuing weekly on Mondays thereafter. Lessons and transport must be **paid for up front via our SchoolMoney** online payments system.

As last year, we will avail of the excellent new facilities at Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing & Leisure Complex where children can learn to swim in the knowledge that they can stand up immediately, placing their feet on the pool floor, if they feel uncomfortable. Children will enjoy a swimming session and an additional sports hall session during their weekly visit.

Diary dates

Term dates for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 academic year can be accessed via a document at the bottom of the following page:

<http://www.kirkistownprimaryschool.com/term-dates--holidays.html>

Our calendar, denoting any significant weekly events can accessed via our website:

<http://www.kirkistownprimaryschool.com/calendar.html>

To stay up to date with the latest information, please make sure the school office has up to date contact numbers for our text messaging service.

WHAT TRUSTED ADULTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT: SOCIAL MEDIA & MENTAL HEALTH

Social Media is often scrutinised as having a negative impact on children's mental health. Children and young people are now growing up in a technology dominated world, and social media plays a major role in their social lives. This balanced guide focuses on both the positive and negative impacts that social media can bring to young people and their mental health.

POSITIVE IMPACTS

EASY ACCESS TO SUPPORT AND HELP

Due to delays in young people getting help for their mental health, such as experiencing low mood, or suffering from anxiety, they may sometimes reach out to access support from others online. Sharing problems or issues with friends, peers and broader social networks can be met with positive reaction, with nearly 7 in 10 teens reporting to receive support on social media during tough or challenging times. Where there are moderated communities which offer support and guidance, children can be provided with a great source of support.

SUSTAINING FRIENDSHIPS AND MAKING CONNECTIONS

There is evidence to suggest that strong adolescent friendships can be enhanced by social media interaction, allowing children to create stronger bonds with people they already know. Online relationships can actually make children more relationship-oriented, thoughtful, and empathic. By sharing comments on pictures, videos and posts, it can create long-term friendships as they can continually keep in touch, even with a distance between them.

A SENSE OF BELONGING

Support can be found in various places online: sometimes this is known as 'finding your tribe'. Online platforms and groups can provide a wonderful sense of belonging for children. They can find peers with similar interests and circumstances which can sometimes be difficult to find in real-life. As a result, this can create stronger connections and help to build confidence.

NEGATIVE IMPACTS

SELF-ESTEEM & BODY IMAGE

There are 10 million new photographs uploaded to Facebook alone every hour, providing an almost endless potential for young people to be drawn into appearance-based comparisons whilst online. No one is the same as how they portray themselves online as we tend to only show the best part of ourselves. The pressure to fit-in and conform is huge, which can become a driving force for children to replicate what they see from friends, celebrities and sponsored adverts. This pressure may contribute to anxiety, low mood and a feeling of inadequacy. As a result, it can lead to a feeling of low satisfaction with their own lives.

HARMFUL ADVICE

The online world provides the opportunity for anybody to upload and share photoshopped pictures, edited videos, fake news and even unvetted advice. Children may stumble upon this, which could potentially encourage them make wrong decisions and not get the help that they need. It's important that you teach your child to differentiate between what is true and useful information and what is false.

ADDICTION AND COMPULSIVE CHECKING

Social media addiction is thought to affect around 5% of teenagers. The Office for National Statistics found that children who spend more than 3 hours a day on social media are more than twice as likely to support poor mental health. Furthermore, compulsive checking due to 'Fear Of Missing Out' has been linked to poor and disturbed sleep, as well as difficulty to relax during evenings. One in five young people say they wake up during the night to check messages on social media, leading them to be three times as more likely to feel constantly tired at school than their classmates who don't use social media during the night.

CYBERBULLYING

One recent large-scale UK study showed that cyberbullying is one of the biggest challenges for young people. Other studies suggest that cyberbullying has a bigger effect on wellbeing and mental health than other types of bullying. 7 in 10 young people have experienced cyberbullying, with 37% of young people saying they experience cyberbullying on a high-frequency basis. Young people are twice as likely to be bullied on Facebook than on any other social network.

Meet our expert

This guide has been written by Anna Bateman. Anna is passionate about placing prevention at the heart of every school, integrating mental wellbeing within the curriculum, school culture and systems. She is also a member of the advisory group for the Department of Education, advising them on their mental health green paper.



HELPFUL APPS:

- Hub of Hope - <https://hubofhope.co.uk/>
- Mindshift
- Smiling Mind

SOURCES OF HELP:

- Childline, 0800 1111 or visit their website
- Bullying UK, 0808 8002222
- Young Minds Parents line, 0808 802 5544

SOURCES: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/600000/young-people-and-mental-health.pdf, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/mentalhealth/articles/young-people-and-mental-health/2019-10-26>, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/mentalhealth/articles/young-people-and-mental-health/2019-10-26>, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/mentalhealth/articles/young-people-and-mental-health/2019-10-26>, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/mentalhealth/articles/young-people-and-mental-health/2019-10-26>