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Tuesday 5th December 2023

Thank You from Harding Memorial Primary School

We would like to thank all those pupils, parents and friends of the school who attended the Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School Prospective Primary 1 Open Evening on Monday 27th November 2023. Hopefully everyone who attended this event found it useful, informative and enjoyable. As School Principal I would like to formally acknowledge my appreciation to all our School Staff for the additional time, energy and expertise that they invested in making our School Open Evening such an outstanding success.

The Education Authority Application Digital Admission Process for access to Primary 1 at Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School in September 2024 will start on Tuesday 9th January 2024

- ✓ There will be a Clay Razy Craft Afternoon Session for Prospective Primary 1 Pupils and Parent/Guardians on Monday 8th January 2024 starting at 3.00pm.
- ✓ School will close at 1.55pm/2.00pm for all Primary 1 to Primary 7 pupils on Monday 8th January 2024 to enable School Staff to make preparations for this school induction event.
- ❖ **If you know of any parent who has a child due to start Primary 1 in September 2024, please encourage them to attend our **Prospective Pupil Event on Monday 8th January from 3.00pm – 4.00pm.** In addition, any Prospective P1 Parent/Guardian who would like to tour the school and view our Foundation Stage Resource area should contact the school office in order to arrange an individual appointment and tour of Harding Memorial with the School Principal.**

Key Dates
September 2024 to June 2025 school year

- 12 December 2023**
Admissions Criteria published
- 9 January 2024**
Applications open at 12noon
- 26 January 2024**
Applications close at 12noon

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ea Education Authority

CHILDREN BEARING BRUNT OF SAVAGE ECONOMIC CUTS

As you will be aware, Teaching and Non-Teaching staff in Schools have been engaged in a lengthy industrial dispute with the Department of Education regarding pay and conditions, which shows no signs of abating. This action includes action short of strike action and direct strike action. Teachers in Northern Ireland are currently the lowest paid teachers in the whole of the UK, and by quite some distance. Teachers in Northern Ireland continue to provide amongst the best educational experiences in these islands. Jacquie White, General Secretary of the Ulster Teachers' Unions has recently commented that *"We are truly in unchartered territory now. Never before in the history of our profession have we faced such a parlous situation. Our education system here in Northern Ireland, once the envy of the UK and beyond, is in the jaws of a once in a lifetime crisis and unless something is done to address that it is our children who will pay the price"*.

One of the biggest challenges we face is the funding disparity between Northern Ireland and other regions in the UK. It is concerning to learn that Scotland receives £1,300 more per pupil than we do. This significant difference creates obstacles in providing the resources and opportunities that our students deserve and the biggest losers in a situation like this are invariably our children. The financial funding in regards to Education means that with every year, more and more schools face a deficit in their budgets, meaning that less and less money is available to schools to deliver the fullest provision possible – approximately 48% of schools in Northern Ireland are in a deficit situation and many of those that aren't, will be very soon. Society has changed, and is changing, at what seems to be breakneck speeds in the last number of years. Inevitably, those changes have found their way into schools and, as a result, the role of staff in schools has changed profoundly. This change has led to greater demands on Teaching and Non-Teaching staff, with far greater levels of need now in mainstream schools, when compared to the start of the new millennium. That being the case, it is not unreasonable to expect that an increasing level of need (and thus expectations on school staff) should be met with an appropriate level of increasing support. This is simply not happening and in addition the levels of practical and specialist support available to schools from external bodies, such as the Education Authority and the Department of Education, has steadily declined over the same time frame.

The Non-Teaching members of our staff team are every bit as invaluable as our Teaching Members and our school simply could not function without them, from office staff to classroom assistants, to caretaking and cleaning staff, to catering staff. However, it is also becoming increasingly difficult to recruit people into the likes of classroom assistant roles because they are overstretched and underpaid. At Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School, we remain committed to providing a high-quality education and positive learning environment for our students, despite the challenges we face. We are aware of possible future strike action by both Teaching and Non-Teaching Trade Unions. We know that they do not take this action lightly and struggle with these decisions. When a strike is called it is the duty of the Board of Governors to consider the health and safety of the school, complete the relevant risk assessment and share these findings with our school community as soon as possible. It is not easy for anyone. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation as we navigate through these difficult times together. In summary – I think I will leave the last words to Jacquie White, who has stated *"How can any government justify the morality of allowing the most vulnerable in society – our children – to bear the brunt of savage economic cuts? Yet this is the reality of the failure to address the current – and deepening – crisis in our education."*

Mr S Cumper
Principal



As winter closes in, please remember to send your children to school with coats and hats but also maybe an additional layer under their uniforms.



We continue to try our very best to provide children with as many of our school Christmas traditions as possible. Therefore, I am pleased to confirm that our traditional Christmas Post Box will be in operation from Wednesday 6th December onwards. The children can “post their Christmas cards” in the red Post Box that is situated beside the front staircase **and these Christmas cards will be delivered by “P7 Elves”**. To ensure that they are delivered to the right child – please make sure that the **name of the child and class of the child/children** who are intended to be the recipient is clearly and legibly written on the outside of the envelope.



“Winning is great, sure, but if you are really going to do something in life, the secret is learning how to lose. Nobody goes undefeated all the time. If you can pick up after a crushing defeat, and go on to win again, you are going to be a champion someday.” **Wilma Rudolph**

School Football Team

The Boys and Girls Football Teams participated last week in the Semi- Finals of their respective 7 a Side Cup Competitions. Both matches were very close with the girls team competing against St John the Baptist Primary School in the semi-final of the Liz Bryson Cup and the boys team Springhill Primary School. Unfortunately for our Harding Memorial pupils – the girls team lost narrowly by two goals to one goal and the boys lost narrowly by eight goals to seven goals. Despite their disappointment at the final whistle both the boys and girls team showed good sporting manners by congratulating the opposition on their victory. We would like to thank their respective coaches – Mr Heatley and Miss Hall and the coaches from Cregagh Wanderers Football Club for all their hard work.

School Uniform

Harding Memorial has an excellent uniform wearing tradition. We feel that wearing the school uniform promotes the child's feeling of belonging to our school. **We have recently replenished our supply of school uniform and now have a number of spare school uniform items that are available for parent/guardians to access on request.** Please contact either Mrs Lyttle, Mrs Shannon or Mr Cumper if you require further information or assistance with this issue which we hope will be of benefit to school families who are in urgent need of replacing uniform items.