



Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Dear Primary 1 to Primary 7 Parent/Guardian

### Halloween Half Term

- School will close for all Primary 1 – Primary 7 pupils for the Half Term Holiday at their usual class stopping times on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2021.
- The School Half Term Holiday will take place from Monday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2019 to Friday 29<sup>th</sup> October 2021. (inclusive dates)
- School will reopen at the usual time for all Primary 1 – Primary 7 children on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2021. We hope that all our Families have a safe and relaxing Half Term.

### Inclement Weather Arrangements

As we come into more consistent cold and wet weather please ensure that your child has a coat with him / her every day. If it is at all possible our children will be outside at break and lunch as they need opportunities for exercise, running about and playing with their friends. It is of particular importance that each child has their name written on their coats as several children may have the same “type” of coat and identification can be very difficult.

### Department of Education: School Attendance Matters – A Parent’s Guide

In Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School we believe that it is vitally important that Home and School work together to help children obtain a high percentage of school attendance. Parent/Guardians are encouraged to work in partnership with Harding Memorial, notifying us of the reason for any of their child’s absences and highlighting any areas of concern they may have so they can be addressed promptly. Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School has a link Education and Welfare Officer (EWO) employed by the Education Authority whose aim is to reduce unnecessary absences from school by offering support and help to pupils, parents and schools. A school will normally make a referral to Education Welfare Service when a pupil’s attendance is a cause for concern or when attendance drops below 85%. The Department of Education has produced a leaflet called “School Attendance Matters - A Parent's Guide” which is available via the following web link and has also been attached with this email for parental information :

[www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/school-attendance-matters-parents-guide](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/school-attendance-matters-parents-guide)

In particular we would like to make parents aware of the following information: **“For some parents, 90% may seem like an acceptable level of attendance, but the reality is that 90% attendance means that your child will miss half a school day each week or 19 days of school during the school year – that’s nearly 4 school weeks.”** If any Parent/Guardian has any queries about the procedures relating to school absence, please contact the School Principal at your earliest possible convenience.



## Public Health Agency

The revised approach on self-isolation of close contacts continues as follows:

- ✓ PHA contact tracing service will identify and ask the very closest contacts, for example very close friends, to isolate and get a test. Other contacts in school, such as those in the same class or who sit near the case, will not routinely be asked to isolate and book a test.
- ✓ PHA have identified two criteria for close contact - an exchange of saliva or intimate care. This means pupils and staff for example are highly unlikely to be identified as a close contact in school even if they are in a room with multiple cases
- ✓ School leaders will no longer be required to respond to every case by identifying contacts. PHA will undertake the work and will only contact the school Principal for assistance in limited circumstances.
- ✓ Parents will be asked to inform the school if their child tests positive as part of normal school absence reporting.

**Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School will continue to send a message to inform parents if someone in their child's class (who has recently been in school) tests positive, in order to allow families to be vigilant and minimise the risk of transmission to vulnerable family members. It remains our intention to maintain the "bubble approach" to minimise the transmission of infection. Our priority must continue to be the safety and welfare of our pupils and staff and we must follow best advice to protect one another. Please continue to keep myself or Mrs Shannon updated if the children have a positive PCR result so that we may monitor the situation and liaise with PHA when appropriate. I very much appreciate the strong parental support which has been so evident throughout the term so far, as we aim to limit the spread of infection in our School.**

**Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School  
Parental Information Update from the PSNI**



**Dear Mr Cumper**

**It has been brought to Police attention that a number of parents of the pupils at Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School, are parking illegally, irresponsibly and ultimately unsafely in and around the area of the school during drop off and pick up times. We are fully aware of the limited parking spaces in the area around the school, however we would like to enforce the message of **KEEPING PEOPLE SAFE** and in this case, your pupils. Parents should be responsible to respect the double yellow lines and not parking on junctions. This creates blind spots for other motorists and pedestrians. We know all parents want to ensure that their children arrive and come home from school safely. Our officers will be doing some road safety activity around the school in the near future and we will be educating drivers and pupils alike. We do not want to have to enforce fixed penalty notices.**

**Kind regards,**

**Strandtown PSNI Neighbourhood Team**

Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School acknowledges that driving Children to school is seen as the most convenient choice for parents with busy lives. Many parents take the view that by driving their children to school they are keeping them safe. Yet the combination of each individual decision makes an increase in vehicle traffic and congestion, particularly at the school gate. Many children now miss out on the opportunity to develop vital road safety skills with their parents on the way to school. They fail to build up confidence and learn the ability to manage risk walking around their local community. Walking can improve overall levels of fitness in children and adults. It is a cost effective method in which to exercise. This can have a positive impact both mentally and physically. We realise that there are some parents who have no alternative but to drive their children to school, however many are driving short distances where walking is a real option.

I do appreciate that the vast majority of our parents both drive and park responsibly during the school commute, but I am also aware of increasing incidents of dangerous and inconsiderate parking around school. I know pick up and drop off times are difficult and very busy due to large amounts of children on both our sites however a small minority of parents are parking without any thought for our local residents. The communication above from the PSNI Strandtown Neighbourhood Team makes clear that it is an offence to wilfully obstruct the highway which can be enforced by police. However this type of enforcement action will obviously be used only as a last resort and we hope that by communicating the information from the PSNI with our Parental Body, that we will be able to satisfactorily rectify the current local parking difficulties.

### **Dogs In School**

We would like to remind all Parent/Guardians about previous guidance regarding dogs in school and would like to thank all adults in advance for their co-operation with the successful management of this issue.

- Dogs' leads need to be held by adults only. Dogs may be tied up away from door entry on a short lead for brief periods of time (giving enough time to take a child into class)
- No dogs are allowed near places where children are playing or waiting in the playground or near entrance areas as pupils have to feel free to be able to enter and leave school and play away from dogs.
- Dogs should be walked around the perimeter of the main playground when collecting children.
- Dogs must be under constant adult supervision and must be kept away from the school entrance areas so that children have a choice whether they want to come in direct contact with dogs.
- No dogs accompanying children to and from school are allowed inside any school buildings.
- Parents are responsible for cleaning up any soiling by their dog on the school grounds and failure to do so will mean the dog will no longer be allowed in the school grounds.
- When bringing dogs on to the site, parents do so with an absolute understanding that their dog has no issues around children, has never displayed any aggression towards children and **that the owner believes the dog is fully trustworthy in a school environment.**





Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School is part of the local community and is very appreciative of the support it receives from the various stakeholders in the school. Participation by Parent/Guardians and others from the community have a direct impact on the educational value of the school and is greatly appreciated by both governors and staff. Links between home and school are actively promoted. In order to develop these links a number of actions have been taken over the last two school years to improve communication between Home and School such as:

- ✓ Teachers to Parents E Mail System which has allowed HMIPS to send E Mail Communications and Document Attachments to both individual school families and to whole class groups.
- ✓ Seesaw For Schools which is a digital platform where teachers can create learning tasks and assignments for students and as a consequence help develop a better relationship with our parent community

Therefore we are very pleased to announce the development of a Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School Facebook Page which has been designed by the School Vice Principal, Mrs Baird. We hope that you will enjoy viewing the work of the children that we have already uploaded. We are hoping that we will also have some photos of the wonderful costumes that will be worn by our pupils during the Halloween Theme Non - Uniform Day on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> October.

**You can dress up as whatever or whoever you want on Friday 22nd October. If you don't want to dress up, you can wear whatever clothes you would like. The choice is entirely yours !!!!**



# Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2021

## Halloween Theme

### Non Uniform Day



You can wear your Favourite Clothes or  
**Halloween Fancy Dress**  
to School on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> October

✓ But please make sure that any Halloween Costumes that are worn  
are Not Too Scary for other Children and the School Principal



On Halloween, lots of you may be heading out on the streets to go trick or treating. We've put together some tips to make sure you stay safe while having fun:

- Please make sure a responsible adult or guardian goes with you - it could be an older brother or sister if they're over 16
- Plan your route before you leave the house and make sure someone else knows where you are going
- Wear reflective or light-coloured clothing so you can be seen
- Carry a torch to check what's around you and avoid falling over
- Stay close to home and if possible only visit the houses of people you know
- **NEVER enter a stranger's home**
- Stay on pavements and check carefully before crossing a road - especially if there's a large group of you
- Throw away any treats or sweets that have been opened or unwrapped
- If you are wearing a mask, make sure that you can see clearly out of it
- Make sure your costume is warm - it is almost November!
- Bring water with you, you may get thirsty!
- Don't argue with people or "trick" them if they don't have more sweets or don't want to celebrate Halloween. There will be many more who want to engage in the fun!
- Take Care - Be Safe - And have a great Half Term Holiday