

Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School



Principal: S Cumper
info@hardingmemorial.belfast.ni.sch.uk



105 Cregagh Road
Belfast BT6 8PZ
Telephone: 028 90458040
Fax: 028 90460917

Wednesday 27th September 2023

Dear Parent/Guardian

The first weeks back at school have been very busy and it has been fantastic for me as School Principal to observe how well our pupils from Primary 1 to Primary 7 have settled into their school routines with both class lessons and behaviour going well throughout the school. We appreciate all the hard work that our Parent/Guardians perform behind the scenes to help their child/children to be prepared for school. However, we are also aware that it is not only our school children who require support from time to time. **We are also here to help you as Parent/Guardians.**

If your family is experiencing difficulties at home, as Principal of Harding Memorial, I will always try to provide additional support at school and I understand that you are not always able to share details and that's okay. If your child is coming to school after a difficult night, morning or weekend, **then please email me or phone me to let me know to "keep a wee eye on them"**. Nothing else will be said or asked. This will let me know that your child may need extra time, patience, or help during the day. Also in these bleak economic times, we as a school understand how challenging life is for so many people at the moment. You know your own child/children. You know what works for them and your family. Please focus on the health and happiness of your family and please be assured that you are not alone. Harding Memorial is here to help everyone in our community.

I would also like to take this opportunity to comment upon the current state of play regarding educational funding in Northern Ireland. The obsession with cutting costs, completing necessary maintenance jobs in the cheapest way possible or, conceivably, not completing necessary maintenance jobs at all, the lack of investment in the schools estate and chronic underfunding of the education sector, particularly at primary level are all now having a day to day impact on your children's experiences. The current and future financial outlook for schools is really awful. Basic school funding is inadequate, and this has a direct impact on provision in all schools. We rightly expect that our schools are adequately funded to provide the highest possible standard of educational experiences for our children and that our system ensures that the needs of our most vulnerable children, particularly our children with additional needs, are appropriately met. This is simply not possible with the current level of funding in the sector. We thank you again for your continued support for our school as we work together to do the best for all the children in our care.



Our pupils had a wonderful surprise in School yesterday – Tuesday 26th September – with a fantastic performance of Cinderella by M & M Theatrical Productions. We would like to thank the School Parent Teachers and Friends Association (P.T.F.A.) for their very generous funding of this event which was enjoyed by both Pupils and Staff alike.

Primary 1 – Primary 7 School Curriculum Zoom Meetings

We place great value on opportunities for Home/School liaison and we would like to express our gratitude to those Parent/Guardian who were able to attend our Primary 1 – Primary 7 Parent Zoom Curriculum Meetings in September. We were greatly encouraged by the wonderful level of interest and support, evidenced by great online attendance, and we trust that everyone who came along found the information shared to be interesting and that it will be beneficial in supporting your child's education as we progress through the current 2023/2024 School Year. We believe that these type of meetings are very beneficial for both Parents and Teaching Staff in helping to improve the communication between Home and School which accordingly can only be of benefit to every child at Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School. I would particularly like to thank our School Teachers for being able to facilitate these virtual meetings outside of their normal working school day especially during a period of agreed Teacher Trade Union Industrial Action Short of Strike. The continued dedication and commitment of all the Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff in Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School is a source of inspiration to myself as Principal.

In order to build upon this very important relationship we would like to give Primary 1 – Primary 6 Parent/Guardians advance notice of the **Parent Teacher Consultation that will take place on the week beginning Monday 13th November 2023.** Further information about this process will be sent home with your child and communicated via Seesaw in due course but it should be noted that it is the intention of school that these Parent Teacher Interviews will take place using School Cloud which is a secure video facility (similar to Zoom or Teams). We used this software last year with Parent/Guardians and we were pleased with the outcomes of this process. It has also proved beneficial for many working parents in that they do not have to ask out of work to attend.

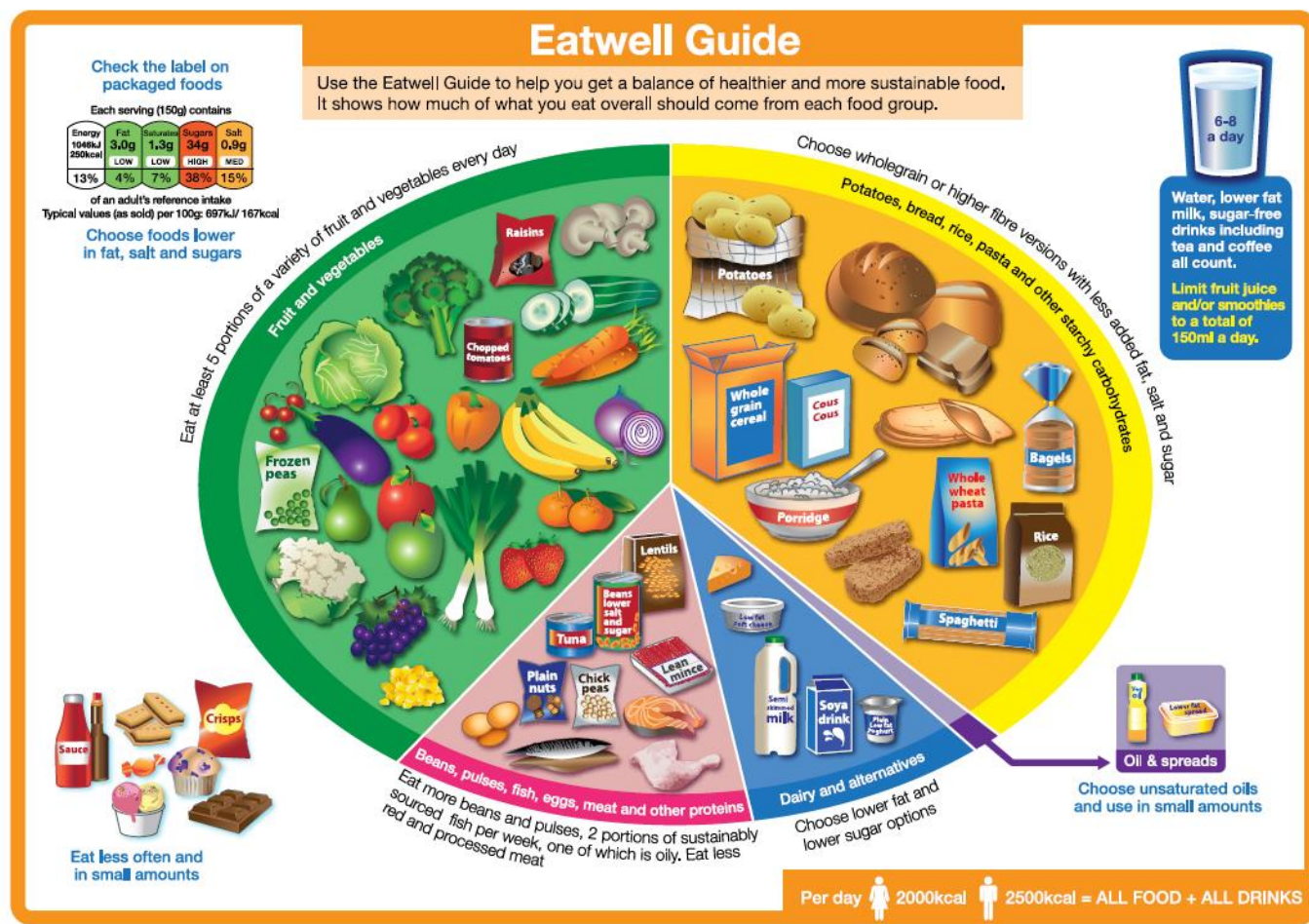
The Primary 1 – Primary 6 Parent Teacher Consultations that will take place shortly after the Half Term are intended to provide an opportunity for you to be informed about your child's progress and performance in school and how you can assist your child in his or her learning. It should also give you an important opportunity to let the class teacher know of factors that may be affecting your child or concerns you may have. We hope that all parents will be able to avail of this opportunity to communicate with their child's class teacher, especially those parents who had been unable to attend their child's Parent Curriculum Zoom Meetings earlier in September 2023. **Please note that Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School will close all week for all P1 – P7 Pupils at 1.00pm during the week starting Monday 13th November 2023.**

Healthy Lifestyles at Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School

We encourage pupils to choose healthy options with regard to their diet and lifestyle. We actively encourage all children to drink milk or water in school and to bring in a healthy snack for break. Children are allowed to have access to water in class. **We would request that all water bottles are clearly labelled to avoid confusion in class.** Recent Educational research has indicated that a pupil's concentration in class is enhanced by proper diet and nutrition. We would therefore ask you to be ever mindful of this when preparing lunch breaks or snacks for your child to eat in school. A leaflet for parents of Primary School children has been produced by the Public Health Agency . It contains practical tips for parents, carers and children on how to pack an appetising, healthy lunchbox. You can view the leaflet via the following weblink below:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/leaflets-parents>

We hope that the document link below will be of benefit to all HMIPS Parent/Guardians.



Source: Public Health England in association with the Welsh government, Food Standards Scotland and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland

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Please Leave All Toys At Home

We would seek to remind parents of our established school policy which is “**Please No Toys In School Except For Show and Tell**”. Each teacher will inform their class of their Show and Tell Day. The reason for this policy is that we are worried that a child’s toy may get misplaced or damaged. We would formally request that **all toys are left at home**, including stuffed animals as when children bring in toys from home, they become distracted and the other children do as well. This toy description would include a wide range of items such as Collecting Card Games, Miniature Action Figures, Dolls and Lego etc.

After School Clubs

In Harding Memorial we aim to give our pupils the opportunity to further and widen their interests and once again in Term 1 we are offering an extensive range of After School activities. These clubs form an important part of our extended school life and are only possible because of the support of the various External Organisations associated with our School. We are happy to report that the following clubs will be operating in School for pupils in Term 1 for Pupils: Table Tennis Club, Art Club, Bible Club, Football Club, Clay Razy, Music Club and Cricket Club. A number of these clubs were very heavily oversubscribed and inevitably some children and parents were disappointed that their child/children were unsuccessful with their application for a particular After School Club. As Parent/Guardians were previously informed - **places in the After School Clubs were allocated on a First Come and First Served Basis vis the School Money Booking System**. School would like to make very clear that we always endeavour to give Parent/Guardians equality of opportunity when applying for a place in these After School Clubs. However, the School Money System does not have the ICT Facility to limit participation in After School Clubs to one activity per child. In addition, it should be acknowledged that the organisation of these After School Clubs is a considerable

organisational exercise that requires significant time from School Office Staff. I would like to thank Mrs Shannon and Mrs Mackey for their continued hard work, dedication and patience when dealing with this very complex administrative issue.

In endeavouring to ensure the safety of our children it is important that Parent/Guardians are aware of the finishing times for all these after school activities and that arrangements are particularly clear for the collection of our youngest pupils at the end of After School Activities. **In particular, we would hope that all Parent/Guardians would be aware of the necessity to be punctual for P2 & P3 Pupil Pick Up Times as these pupils will not be dismissed until an appropriate adult arrives at 3.00pm.** In addition we would request that all P2 – P7 Parent/Guardians please check which dates the Monday to Thursday After School Clubs will be taking place as they have been occasions in the past when a child has not been collected on time due to a Parent/Guardian forgetting that the After School Club is not on that particular date.

School Charity Event – Friday 29th September 2023

This year our School Charity Donations will be in support of Leukaemia & Lymphoma NI who are the only charity in Northern Ireland dedicated to blood cancer research. Their mission is to improve survival rates and quality of life for all blood cancer patients by supporting clinicians, scientists and students researching these diseases. **In order to raise funds for this charity we are holding a Non Uniform Red Theme Day in School on Friday 29th September.** We would encourage all our P1 – P7 Pupils to come to school on this date wearing their favourite Red Clothing (Please note that the choice of Coloured Clothing is purely voluntary and that Friday 29th September is intended to be a Non School Uniform Day for all Pupils). **Children are encouraged to bring a £1 voluntary charity donation to school.** This is an event very close to the heart of our School Community and we hope that as many pupils as possible will help support this very important charity campaign. This can be paid via SchoolMoney system if you wish.

Coffee Morning in Harding Memorial on Friday 29th September from 9.15am – 10.30am

In order to raise funds for the Leukaemia & Lymphoma NI Charity we are holding a Coffee Morning in the School Assembly Hall on Friday 29th September 2023 from 9.15am – 10.30am. We hope that as many Parent/Guardians and Friends of Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School as possible will join us in the **School Assembly Hall from 9.15am – 10.30am** where it will be possible to purchase a cup of tea/coffee and some refreshments. Access to this event will be via the P5, P6 & P7 School Entrance Door. **For reasons of health and safety no HMIPS Pupils will be able to participate in the Coffee Morning in the School Assembly Hall.** We would like to thank all parent/guardians and pupils in advance of their support of this very important charity.



Free School Meals Entitlement

The impact of the school funding strategy means that we receive a significant increase to our budget for children entitled to free meals. Therefore, it is important that Parents of pupils entitled to Free Meals apply online even if they intend to provide their children with packed lunches. Children do not have to take dinners every day and there is no distinction made between paid and free dinners. **If you are entitled to this payment but have not applied yet you still have LIMITED TIME** to submit your application, please visit

- <https://www.eani.org.uk/financial-help/free-school-meals-uniform-grants/apply-for-free-school-meals-uniform-grants>

If you have applied but have not, as yet, received confirmation from the Education Authority please contact the school office as soon as possible

- Parents of Primary 1 pupils who have not submitted an application form and are entitled should apply as soon as possible so that this process is complete prior to the children staying for lunch from Monday 2nd October 2023.