

# Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School



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Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Dear Primary 1 to Primary 7 Parent/Guardian

As we settle back into the routine of the new School Year we would like to thank Parent/Guardians for assisting us in developing an age-appropriate level of independence in our pupils. At Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School we encourage all our children to take responsibility for aspects of their own learning and personal organisation. Even simple things like coming in on their own from the school gate (under the remote supervision of an adult) are developing important skills. However, we do recognise that Harding Memorial is an extremely busy place and we wish to express our thanks to Parent/Guardians for the helpful and co-operative start made to the new school year, especially in ensuring that children arrive punctually in school each morning. We know there is always a lot of information sent home and we really appreciate the support that you provide for your children and to us as a school. If you have any questions or queries about school organisational routines please feel free to either phone the school office or email the school.

## School Illness

As the term progresses, we will also in all likelihood, experience the usual colds and flus and the inevitable return of the winter stomach virus (Norovirus), causing vomiting and diarrhoea. In cases of colds etc., please use your own parental discretion. If your child is feeling miserable, a couple of days off might do them good. The instruction in cases of vomiting and/or diarrhoea is that your child should NOT return to school until 48 hours after the last symptom, even if they feel fine sooner than 48 hours. For the good of all of the school community, please adhere to these instructions. Once again, thank you for your support in this matter. The current guidance from NI Direct about the symptoms of respiratory infections including COVID-19 Covid can be found on the website link below: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/symptoms-respiratory-infections-including-covid-19>

## Home and School Communication Procedures

Increasingly, we will look to communicate with Parent/Guardians solely using electronic means – School Text Message, School website ([www.hardingmemorial.org.uk](http://www.hardingmemorial.org.uk)) and Seesaw.

- **To ensure that you receive all of the up to date information in a timely fashion, it is crucial that we hold your most up to date mobile telephone number.**

As Parent/Guardians you play an important role in your child's education. We hope to maintain and strengthen the close Home/School links at Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School this year. We believe that the education of our children is a partnership between Home and School and consequently Class Teachers are hosting Virtual Parent/Guardian Curriculum Meetings at the start of the new School Year. These Class Curriculum Meetings are being held via Zoom and the dates and times for these meetings have been previously sent out to P1 – P7 Parent/Guardians in a separate communication. I would like to thank Teaching Staff for volunteering to facilitate these evening Curriculum Zoom Meetings outside of the traditional school working day. I feel that it would be beneficial for all School Stakeholders to be reminded about School Seesaw Communication Guidelines which are summarised below:

- ✓ All Home and School Communication should be kept professional. We believe that it is very important that the relationship between Parent/Guardians and their child's Class Teacher and School Principal is a positive experience. Although there may be rare occasions when School and Home may disagree about an incident that has occurred in school, a spirit of mutual respect with calm and mature co-operation should enable any potential miscommunication issues to be dealt with in a satisfactory manner.
- ✓ Teachers will only reply to Seesaw messages and mark work during the working school day. Please be mindful that teachers are busy teaching and may only have opportunity to reply in the afternoon. It is particularly important that all Parent/Guardians are aware that items posted late in the evening on Seesaw may not be responded to until the following day.
- ✓ Please note that messages of high priority should be delivered by either calling the office – 02890458040 – or by emailing [info@hardingmemorial.belfast.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@hardingmemorial.belfast.ni.sch.uk)
- ✓ **We would prefer that any safeguarding sensitive issues regarding your child should be communicated via phone or e mail to HMIPS and not communicated via Seesaw.**
- ✓ All exchanges between Parents/Guardians and School Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff should be conducted in a co-operative and respectful manner and all Parents/Guardians are asked to adhere to the school's guidelines when seeking contact with their Child's Class Teacher.
- **Please note that members of School Staff will not respond to messages that are deemed inappropriate and these will be forwarded to the School Senior Management Team and Education Authority for review and advice of further action.**

Our professional interest as Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff is identical to yours as Parent/Guardians - that is to give each child the best opportunities we can provide. We are trying to create an environment where children will behave sensibly, act reasonably and thus learn constructively and harmoniously. Your child/children will benefit from your active support throughout his / her time at school. If you have any queries or worries concerning your child's either your child's pastoral care or education, please do not hesitate to contact either Mr Cumper or Mrs Baird at your earliest possible convenience.

### School Security

We are very keen to promote a Healthy Lifestyle amongst our pupils and encourage children walking, cycling or scooting to School. However we would strongly encourage all Parent/Guardians to ensure that their child's bicycle or scooter is locked in place during the school day. Whilst School will prioritise the safety and security of our pupils within the school building, we are aware that there are certain vulnerabilities with items left outside of school e.g. Bicycles and Scooters and would like to confirm that HMIPS cannot be held liable for any "loss".

### Nut Free School

This year in our school we have a number of children who have an allergy to all nuts/nut products. Any contact with nuts/nut products will cause an anaphylactic attack in these children. Therefore we ask you to exclude nuts/nut products from your child's mid-morning snack and packed lunch. This exclusion also applies to items sent to the classrooms for science or 'interest table' collections.

- **We would encourage the organisational routine that Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School is a **NUT FREE ZONE.****

We traditionally make written contact with those classes that have children with additional allergies e.g sesame seeds in order to seek particular parental co-operation with Breaktime and Lunchtime Snacks. Please contact the School Principal if you require further clarification of this issue. We thank all parents in advance for their co-operation in this important matter.

# Free School Meals Entitlement

If you are entitled to this payment but have not applied yet you still have 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>. 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 Parent/Guardians 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. We have noted that we have currently received a lower than normal number of completed Free School Meals Application from the EA. **If you have applied but have not, as yet, received confirmation from the Education Authority please contact the school office as soon as possible.** Please note that you are now required to register and create an account before applying. Please check your details carefully before you submit. The application must be made by the person receiving benefits who is named on the Proof of Benefit Letter / Tax Credits Award Notice / Universal Credit Payments Breakdown. Please include in your application all children for whom you have parental responsibility and who will be attending full time at school or Regional/FE College. Please note the application form works best with an up-to-date web browser (the software you use to access the internet). If you are using an old web browser or if it is out of date, the page may not display properly. The Gov.uk website provides information on upgrading to a newer browser. **Parent/Guardians 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 7<sup>th</sup> October 2024**

## End of School Pickup Arrangements

Please remember that Primary 1, Primary 2 and Primary 3 children should be collected from their individual school entrances. No child from P1, P2 and P3 will be allowed to leave school without a Parent/Minder being identified. Primary 4 to Primary 7 children are permitted to leave school unaccompanied by an adult, **but we would expect any pupil from P4 to P7 Pupil to come back into school if they are unsure whether or not they should have been picked up by a recognised Parent/Guardian.**

If there is an issue that you need to speak to your child's teacher about, you should, in the first instance, contact the school office on 02890458040 and arrangements can be made for the staff member in question to return your call as soon as they can, but it should be recognised that all Teaching Staff have classroom commitments both during and after the normal school day. We look forward to working with both Parents and Pupils to achieve another successful School Year at Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School. If you have any queries or worries concerning your child's education, please do not hesitate to contact the School Principal at your earliest possible convenience. Thank you again for all of your support and cooperation during this early part of the new school year.

## Please Bring a Coat To School

The very welcome and unexpected recent sunny weather has been replaced by more traditional autumn showers. Can Parent/Guardians please ensure that your child/children has a waterproof coat in school every day as we try to go outside at playtime, even if it is raining as we seek to encourage them to be active every day. **Could we politely please remind all Parent/Guardians of the importance of labelling your child's clothing with his/ her name.** We always do our best to

return all your child's belongings at the end of the day, but sadly, with approximately 30 children in each class this can be difficult if the belongings aren't labelled. All of their school uniform looks the same and often the same size. Please help us to look after your child's belongings by labelling everything. When we find clothing with names in, we will return it to the appropriate child.

### 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, Spanish Club, Spanish Club, Handball Club, Music Club, Bricks 4 Kids and Dance Club. In previous years a number of these clubs have been 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 have been previously informed - places in the After School Clubs will be allocated on a First Come and First Served Basis via the School Money Booking System. If your payment has been accepted by School Money – this will be confirmation that your child has successfully obtained a place within their desired After School Activity. Harding Memorial Integrated Primary 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 School Office Staff 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. Club Booking will close on 20<sup>th</sup> September at 3.00pm.

### School Charity Event – Friday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2024

This year our School Charity Donations will be in support of Leukemia & 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 27<sup>th</sup> 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 27<sup>th</sup> 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

## Support Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School with Asda Rewards

We are excited to announce our participation in the **Cash for School** initiative by Asda. By simply downloading the **Asda Rewards app** and selecting **Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School**, you can help us secure vital funding to enhance the education and resources for our children.

### ➤ **How to support us:**

1. Download the **Asda Rewards app** from your app store.
  2. Register and select **Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School** as your chosen school.
  3. Shop at Asda and earn rewards that directly benefit our school!
- Your support will make a significant difference in providing our students with the best possible learning environment. With the funds raised through the Asda Rewards app, we can invest in new educational materials, technology, and extracurricular activities that enrich our children's learning experiences. Every contribution helps us create a more engaging and supportive atmosphere for our students to thrive.
- Thanks for your support - Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School

**Download and opt-in with Asda Rewards and we will donate ££s to schools.**

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**HERE'S HOW**

- 1** Download the Asda Rewards app & sign up today
- 2** Opt-in to Cashpot for Schools and follow the steps in your app
- 3** Shop, scan and we donate

With **Parentkind**

Selected stores. Minimum spend £2+. Exclusions apply including Asda Express & George.com. Subject to availability. UK 18+. App & Opt in required. 0.5% of the value of a customer's eligible shop is donated. Publicly funded primary schools must register with Parentkind charity 1072833. Full T&Cs at asda.com/cashpotforschools. Rewards T&Cs at asda.com/rewards/terms. Ends 30.11.24