

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

Tuesday 19th September 2023

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.

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 Covid guidelines as per NI Direct can be found on the website link below: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-how-stay-safe-and-help-prevent-spread>

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) 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. As you may be aware all Five Northern Ireland Teacher Trade Unions are currently involved in Industrial Action Short of Strike within our Education Sector. **I would like to thank Teaching Staff for volunteering to facilitate these evening Curriculum Zoom Meetings outside of the Working School 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 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 be emailing info@hardingmemorial.belfast.ni.sch.uk
- ✓ **Any sensitive issues regarding your child should be communicated via phone or e mail and should not be communicated via Seesaw.**
- ✓ All exchanges between parents/guardians and school staff should be conducted in a co-operative and respectful manner and 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 the School Principal 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.

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 will also 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.

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.

School Charity Event – Friday 29th September 2023

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 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.

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

In order to raise funds for the Leukemia & 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.**

A cake box is being sent home with each family in advance of this event. We know that our parents are busy people however if you could help us by returning the cake box to school with a few tray bakes, cake or packets of biscuits to help provide refreshments to those who will be visiting the School Assembly Hall on that day we would be extremely grateful. If you would be able to spare even an hour of your time to assist with serving refreshments in the Assembly Hall on Friday 29th September, please contact the School Office as all offers of help would be gratefully received. We would like to thank all parent/guardians and pupils in advance of their support of this very important charity.

School Staff Information Update

I am now in the position to be able to inform Parent/Guardians about a Teaching Staff change that will take place in Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School. We will soon be saying goodbye to Mrs Catherine Murray who has been appointed as the Vice Principal of Dromore Central Primary School. During her time at Harding Memorial Mrs Murray has played a very important senior teaching role across the school. She has been a highly skilled, talented, and positive member of school teaching staff. As School Principal I have been enormously grateful for her commitment and dedication and I know that she will be very successful in her new senior leadership role. Mrs Murray's last day at Harding Memorial will be Wednesday 25th October 2023. The Primary 7 Class Teacher for the remainder of the 2023/2024 School Year will be Miss Amy Cullen. Miss Cullen had previously taught the Primary 7 Class last year whilst they were in P6 on a Thursday and Friday and will be a familiar face to both pupils and parents alike.

In addition I would like to confirm with Parent/Guardians that Mr Gerry Fleming has been replaced as Chairperson of the Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School Board of Governors by Mrs Dawn Mayes. Mrs Mayes had previously been the Vice Chair of the Board of Governors and is a familiar face around the School. Mr Fleming has stepped down as Chairperson after having overseen a successful period for our school including the successful Transformation to Integrated Status in September 2021. Throughout his tenure as Chairperson of the Board of Governors Mr Fleming demonstrated an unrelenting commitment to the pupils, parents and staff of Harding Memorial with a strong focus on the quality of education and pastoral care for everyone. His support and guidance was especially appreciated by myself as School Principal during those very difficult times when Covid disrupted our traditional educational experience. The Governing Body, Senior Management Team, Staff and Pupils would like to formally thank Gerry Fleming for his dedicated service to Harding Memorial Integrated Primary School. Finally I would like to formally confirm with School Stakeholders that Mr Matt Gamble is now the new Designated Governor for Safeguarding and Child Protection in our School as he has replaced Mrs Mayes in that role.

Yours sincerely
Mr S Cumper
Principal