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Newsletter - September 2021



We are delighted to welcome you all back to school. It has been lovely to see the classrooms filled with happy, smiling children. We have missed you all!

As you will have seen from our Stay Safe booklet, all our staff have been working extremely hard to make the school and our school grounds as safe as possible for you and your children.

Monthly Newsletters, dinner menus, holiday dates and other information will be accessed through the school website and your Seesaw App.

Information for starting back to school

Schoolmoney App

Payments for dinners, milk, uniform, school fund and other items through the year can be accessed in the payment tab or shop tab. Cash should no longer be sent into school. If you are having any difficulty with the system, please contact the school office and we will endeavour to help you.

- **Consent Forms**-You will receive a number of consent forms to complete and send back to school next week. These must all be returned together, in the same folder they were sent out in and by the date given on the pack.

If details change during the year, particularly phone numbers, addresses or medical details, please advise us in writing.



- **Morning Snack**-We are encouraging healthy eating in school and request that each child brings a wrapped ready-to-eat piece of fruit for their morning snack. Crisps, chocolate biscuits or sweets should not be brought. Please make sure your child can manage opening his/her break independently. For snack time, yoghurts should not be brought. **Please remember that no products containing nuts should be brought.**
- **Milk / Water**-Milk is available to all children and is paid for through the Schoolmoney App. We are encouraging all children to bring a small bottle of **water** (no juice) to school each day. Children who do not take milk will use their own water bottle at snack time.



Dinners-School dinner costs **£13.00 per week (£2.60 per day)**. You should by now have registered for the Schoolmoney online payment system. Dinners should be ordered for the week **and paid for online by the Sunday evening prior to dinners being taken**. Anyone not registered when dinners commence will be required to provide a packed lunch. This includes those entitled to free meals.

If any parents think their child may be entitled to free school meals and have not yet applied, please contact the Education Authority or fill in a free school meals form which can be found on their website. <https://www.eani.org.uk/financial-help/free-school-meals-uniform-grants/apply-for-free-school-meals-uniform-grants>

The school receives additional money for those children entitled to free school meals, so even if you do not wish to take a meal, please still apply as this will affect our budget.

We are only able to provide free school meals once we have official notification from the Education Authority. Sometimes children who are entitled to free school meals do not wish to have a meal every day and prefer to bring a packed lunch on certain days. Please book accordingly online.

- **Packed Lunch**- Parents are asked to send a healthy lunch and not to send runny yoghurts or crisps. It is also important to ensure your child is able to manage what has been put into his/her lunchbox independently. In order to reduce the amount of waste which has to be disposed of in school any uneaten food along with wrappers etc. will be sent home in lunchboxes. As there are some children in school who suffer from a nut allergy, please do not send any nut-based products into school.
- **Birthday Cake / Party Bags**-We are unable to accept any items from home to be shared with the class.
- **School Uniform**- All the children are looking very smart in their uniforms. We would like to maintain this high standard throughout the year. Please make sure your child wears the correct school uniform every day. Children should be able to put on/take off and fasten their shoes by themselves. **Please ensure you have put your child's name on EVERY item of clothing.**
- **Jewellery/Hair Fastenings/Hair Styles**-Due to health and safety concerns, no jewellery (including earrings) is permitted to be worn in school. If your child's ears have been recently pierced and the earrings are unable to be taken out for a period of time, they must be covered with a plaster. Children wearing items of jewellery to school will be asked to remove them. Long hair should be tied back with a simple hair fastening e.g. plain bobble or ribbon. From time to time a number of children come to school with 'extreme' hairstyles which are unsuitable for school. Often this can cause a distraction in the classroom and also places other parents under pressure to permit similar hairstyles. Please keep these hairstyles for the holidays.



- **Information Session for Parents**-Unfortunately we are unable to hold information sessions for parents at present. Please check our website for induction information.
- **Parent Interviews**-Following the current guidance, we will arrange a telephone call instead of face to face Parent/Teacher interviews for P1-3 and Nursery children during **October** and **March**. Once updated guidance is received we will send out further information.

- **Morning and Home Time Arrangements**

School Times

Please ensure your child arrives to school on time each day.

Our morning arrangements are: -

- **Nursery**- 8.45am- 9.00am
- **P1**- All children should arrive at 8.40 am. If an older sibling is in P2 or P3, he/she can arrive at this time and enter through the younger child's classroom door.
- **P2**- All children should arrive at 8.50 am. If an older sibling is in P3, he/she can arrive at this time and enter through the younger child's classroom door.
- **P3**- All children should arrive at 9.00 am.
- Parents/carers **MUST** leave their children to the yellow line at the door of the classroom. **Parents are asked to note that there is no supervision in school prior to 8.40am.**
- If a child is late, a record of lateness should be completed and signed by the parent. The late child should wait at his/her own classroom door until a member of staff is free to open it.

Our home time arrangements are: -

- **Nursery**- 1.20pm-1.30pm Monday to Thursday, 1.00pm-1.10pm Friday.
- **P1**- 1.55pm Monday to Thursday, 1.20pm Friday.
- **P2**- 2.05pm Monday- Thursday, 1.30pm Friday.
- **P3**- 2.45pm Monday for clubs, 2.15pm Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 1.40- Friday.
- Parents/carers **MUST** collect their children from the classroom doors. At the beginning of the year, parents will be asked to complete a form stating the names of adults with permission to collect their children. We are unable to send children home with anyone under 16 years of age.
- Children are not permitted to play on the grass banks during home time and Strandtown children waiting on our grounds for their siblings on Friday afternoons must be properly supervised.
- Please follow the social distancing guidelines at all times. **Parents are not permitted to stand and socialise on the school grounds.** All parents must exit the school grounds as quickly as possible. This is for everyone's safety.



- Please also stand behind the yellow line outside your child's classroom door.

- **Absence-** Please remember to send a note of explanation to the class teacher if your child has been absent from school.
- Parents should try to make dental and other appointments outside of school hours. If a medical appointment is to be attended during school hours, it is important to let the teacher know **in advance**. If a child is removed from school before the end of the school day, the person collecting the child will be asked to complete a 'withdrawal slip'.
- **School Fund-** Each family is asked to contribute £10 per term to School Fund. This money provides various resources for school along with treats for the children. It also subsidises school activities, and activities associated with Fun Days in December and June are also paid for from School Fund. School Fund is due to be paid online by **Sunday 26 September through the Schoolmoney App**. We greatly appreciate your school fund contribution as it makes such a difference to your child's school experience.
- **School Photographer-**We are working with the school photographer to ensure photographs can be taken in a safe way, adhering to the social distancing guidance.
- **Car Parking-**Please remember that cars are not permitted in the school grounds. This includes taxis and day-care transport. You are also reminded that cars should not be parked on the double yellow lines at the Wilgar Street entrance. Please show consideration for residents, staff and other parents. In order to park in the disabled parking area, you will need to obtain a permit given by the school.
- **Crossing Patrol-**Mr Gracey is responsible for the crossing patrol at Dundela Avenue. Please remember to cross the road with him and also to refrain from parking on the zig-zag lines.
- **Bicycles/Scooters-** Children who come to school on bicycles or scooters should get off them at the school gate and walk in the grounds with them. We have used PTA money to purchase two cycle pods which have been situated in the back playground. Bikes and scooters should be parked in the cycle pods.



- **Grounds-**
 - For safety reasons pedestrians should not come through the main gates – please use the small gate beside the main gate. Please follow the green arrows. If you are walking to/from the back of the school, please use the green painted walkway.
 - **Children should not be on the steep grass banks at Wilgar Street.** We have an increasing amount of outdoor equipment on the grass area at the back of the school. Children should be kept away from these areas when arriving at and leaving school.

- **On Friday afternoons, children from Strandtown should only be in the grounds if they are accompanied AND SUPERVISED by an adult.**
- **Dogs**-Please remember that dogs are not permitted in the school grounds whether on a lead or being carried. If parents are aware of any dogs in the grounds this should be brought to the attention of school staff.
- **School Security / School Gates**-The gate at Dundela Avenue and the gate at the steps in Wilgar Street are normally locked during school hours as a security measure. Entrance to school will only be by the gate and path beside the main double-gates. During September & October, as Nursery & Primary 1 children will be arriving and leaving at different times, gates will remain unlocked. Parents arriving at school during school hours should ring the main door buzzer and wait for a member of staff to assist them.

I hope we can all work together to ensure the safety of our school community and despite the challenges we are continuing to face, I look forward to embracing the year ahead with you and your wonderful children.

Thank you for your support and please do not hesitate to contact me at any time.

Yours faithfully,

S Wilson

S Wilson
Principal



