



NEWSLETTER - SEPTEMBER 2019

Dear Parents

The summer holidays have gone very quickly and another busy school year has started. Mr Baker and the cleaners are thanked for all their hard work to make the school ready for the new term. The teaching and non-teaching staff were in school the last week of August preparing the classrooms, attending training sessions and meeting to plan for the new school year.

Please take time to read the information which is contained in this Newsletter. It covers many areas of school life and will be useful for reference. Newsletters are sent home monthly and other letters and information as appropriate.

Monthly Newsletters, dinner menus, holiday dates and other information may also be accessed on the school website. Please check it prior to ringing school to enquire about dates/events.

Website address - dundelainfants.co.uk

Data Checking Sheet (P1-P3)/Parental Responsibility Form & Photograph Consent Form (P2 & P3 only)
These forms are contained in the brown envelope. Please complete, sign and return them to school in the envelope.

Please check the details on the data sheet carefully and return it to school as soon as possible. Amendments should be made in **red** pen. It is important that we have at least two daytime contact telephone numbers. Please note that as the computer can only accept one option for categories such as meals and travel you should indicate the option which is most frequently used. We have a text messaging service linked to the C2K computer system which will be sent to the first contact name. This will only be used for emergencies.

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

We have been advised that parents should be asked to update the green Parental Responsibility Sheet and the Photograph Consent form annually. Please return these along with the data sheet in the envelope supplied.

Information Session for Parents

We will be holding Information Sessions for parents in P1-P3 during September. These sessions will provide useful information on what the children will be learning this year and how best you can support them.

Dates are as follows:

Primary 1	Thursday 26 September 2019 1.30-2.10pm
Primary 2	Thursday 19 September 2019 1.30-2.10pm
Primary 3	Wednesday 18 September 2019 1.30-2.10pm

I would encourage as many parents as possible to attend and further details will be sent closer to the dates.

Punctuality

It is important that children are on time for school every day. Parents are reminded that a first bell will ring at 8.45am when the cloakroom doors will open and a second bell at 8.55am when school will start. Children should be in school before the second bell rings. The cloakroom doors are operated electronically and are locked at 9.00am. Any children who arrive after this time should be brought through the front door. Please ensure that children are safely in the school building before leaving. In particular, we would ask parents not to drop children off at the gate. Last year, a number of children were late on a regular basis and this was disruptive for the class and often upsetting for the children who were late. Please make a special effort to be on time as classes will be disrupted by children having to access the cloakroom after school has started at 8.55am. Children arriving after 8.55am will be marked on the roll sheet as late.

Absence

All parents have previously received a copy of the school Attendance Policy. Please remember to send a note of explanation to the class teacher if your child has been absent from school. Attendance is monitored on a regular basis, both in school and by the Educational Welfare Officer. You are asked to note that holidays during term-time are recorded as 'unauthorised absence' and work is not provided during these absences. Please try to plan family holidays during school holidays. If the level or pattern of absence becomes a concern, contact will be made with parents. The Educational Welfare Officer is informed of children whose attendance falls below 85%.

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**. Department of Education guidelines state that if parents let the school know in advance about a medical appointment the child will be marked present if they return to school within the session (am or pm). If there is no advance notice the child will be marked absent for that session.

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' at the Office.

Overall average attendance for P1-P3 classes during 2018-2019 was 93.8% which was a slight increase on the previous year (93.6%) but fell short of our target of 94%. During the year a significant number of children were absent due to family holidays and this reduced our overall attendance significantly. We can only achieve a higher percentage with your help.

The Department of Education is aware that as the school population becomes more diverse, at times families are required to leave the UK due to family circumstances, work or immigration matters. If any families find themselves in this situation, please make contact with me to discuss the matter. On some occasions the Department of Education may permit the absence without it affecting the child's overall attendance however an application form is required to be completed giving as much advance notice as possible.

Morning Snack

We are encouraging healthy eating in school and request that each child brings a plain biscuit, small sandwich or wrapped ready-to-eat piece of fruit for their morning snack. Crisps, chocolate biscuits or sweets should not be brought. For snack time, yoghurts should not be brought. Once again please remember that no products containing nuts should be brought.

We will be continuing with our Fruity Fridays and would ask that only fruit is provided as a snack on Fridays. Details will be sent at a later date regarding other initiatives.

Milk / Water

Milk is available in school each day for snack. A letter regarding payment has been sent home with P1 children and with those P2 & P3 children who took milk last term. If your child did not take milk last term and wishes to take milk this term, please ask the teacher for details. Only those children who have paid by **11 September** will be able to have milk during this term. The cost for term 1 is £13.50. We are encouraging all children to bring a small bottle of water to school each day. Children who do not take milk will use their own water bottle at snack time.

Dinners

Dinners for P1-P3 children are **£13.00 per week (£2.60 per day)**. Those parents who pay for school dinners will be supplied with a set of envelopes for the year (please use these only for Dundela dinner money). In order to assist with administration and banking of money, may I remind all parents that dinner money must be sent in on a **Monday** unless the child is absent. Cheques should be made payable to **Education Authority**. Dinners can only be supplied on an occasional basis in an emergency situation.

Changes to the ways in which schools bank money for milk and dinners were made last year by the Education Authority. May I ask you to send in as little 'small change' as possible to assist with banking administration.

If any parents think their child may be entitled to free school meals and have not yet applied, please contact the school office for a form which should be returned to the Education Authority. We are only able to provide 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. If your child will not be taking dinners every day, please send a note to the class teacher on Mondays indicating the days they will be having dinner.

Packed Lunch

Parents are asked not to send runny yoghurts or crisps for lunch. 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 nut allergy, please do not send any nut-based products into school.**

Birthday Cake / Party Bags

As a number of children suffer from various food allergies and also some parents wish to monitor the food / sweets eaten by their children we therefore request that birthday cake/treats/party bags should not be sent in to school to be distributed by the teachers.

Money

Please send all money/cheques in an envelope on the day requested stating clearly child's name, amount enclosed and what the money is for. Parents are advised to ensure there are sufficient funds to meet cheques issued to school as there is an additional charge if cheques are returned unpaid, which will be passed on to parents.

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. Sweatshirts, polo shirts and waterproof coats are kept in stock in school. If you require any items, please contact the office as soon as possible.

Physical Education

Please ensure that gym shoes, along with tee-shirt and shorts are brought into school in a drawstring bag. Shorts without pockets are most suitable. No tracksuit bottoms, or football kits should be worn. For this term, Primary 1 children only need gym shoes in a drawstring bag.

Names

Please ensure that your child's name is on the following items:-

Sweatshirt	P.E. Bag	Coat	School Bag
Polo Shirt	Gym Shoes	Shoes	Lunch Box

Jewellery/Hair Fastenings/Hair Styles

Please remember that the only jewellery permitted is **small ear studs**. Children wearing items of jewellery to school including hoop earrings, necklaces and bracelets will be asked to remove them. Long hair should be tied back with a simple hair fastening eg. plain bobble or ribbon. Hair bands may be worn but please keep other fancy hair fastenings for wearing outside school. 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.

Headlice

Now that the children have settled back into school it is possible that we will get reports of head lice. This is a usual occurrence in all schools, however steps need to be taken by parents to ensure that the matter is kept under control. Please remember to check your child's hair weekly. The School Health Service recommends wet combing with conditioner as the best method of detection. It is important that everyone checks their child's hair so that occurrences of head lice are kept to a minimum.

Parent Interviews

Parent/Teacher interviews for P1-3 and Nursery children will be held during **October** and **March**. At the October interview you will have an opportunity to meet your child's teacher and hear how your child has settled into his/her new class. The teacher will also discuss how you can help your child during the year. These interviews will be held week commencing Monday 21 October and Interview times will be sent out on Wednesday 9 October. Please note that the second set of interviews will be held week commencing Monday 9 March 2020.

During Parent Interview weeks, children will have their school dinner/packed lunch and school will finish at 1.00pm for P1 – P3 children.

Assessment

During the year teachers will be carrying out ongoing progress assessments. In the 3rd term assessments linked to end of year reports and information to be passed on to the next teacher will be carried out from the beginning of May and continue into June. As the assessments include observations and practical activities it is important that children are at school as time constraints and organisation will not permit individual assessments at another time.

Charity

During the year we hope to support various charities. Please send in small change for the Penny Bottle. We also collect used stamps which are sent to Charity.

School Fund

Each family is asked to contribute £6 per term to School Fund. This money provides various resources for school along with treats for the children. It also pays for or subsidises school activities such as visiting Theatre Companies and Educational Visitors. Activities associated with Fun Days in December and June are also paid from School Fund. Please use the School Fund envelope supplied when sending your contribution. School Fund is due to be paid by **Wednesday 18 September**.

P3 Clubs

During terms 1 & 2 Primary 3 children will remain in school until 3.00pm on Wednesday afternoons when they will take part in Clubs. P3 Clubs will start on **Wednesday 2 October**.

Extended Schools Activities

We have received funding which will enable us to continue with some activities funded by the Extended Schools Scheme. A Homework Club for Primary 3 children will be held on Mondays/Tuesdays. A Maths Attack Club will be held for P2 children on Thursday afternoons during Term 2. We will also be holding a Hearsay Club for selected P2 children. Details of the Homework Club are enclosed for P3 children. Information about the P2 activities will be forwarded to parents at a later stage.

School Photographer

The school photographer will be taking individual/family group photographs on Monday 7 October. Permission slips will be sent home later in the month.

PTA

The PTA had a successful year last year and organised a number of events and activities. Thanks are expressed to all who assisted with planning and organisation. A meeting will be held on Monday 7 October at 7.30pm to make preparations for events and activities to be held during this year.

Paper Tissues

Each year we ask parents to send in a box of tissues to the class teacher for use by the children during the year. It would be appreciated if all parents did so this year.

Car Parking

Please remember that cars are not permitted in the school grounds. This includes taxis and day-care transport. Please park in the nearby streets and walk to the school gates. You are also reminded that cars should not be parked on the double yellow lines at the Wilgar Street entrance. We have been advised that the DOE Roads Service will continue to monitor parking in the vicinity of the school and will issue parking tickets if necessary. Please show consideration for residents, staff and other parents.

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. If you are walking to/from the back of the school please use the green painted walkway.

May I remind parents that children should not be on the steep grass banks at Wilgar Street. Please keep to the paths coming to and going home from school. Scooters or bicycles should not be ridden inside the grounds. Please keep children with you in the grounds. 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 by an adult. Last year we experienced some difficulties as a number of parents arranged to meet Strandtown children at Dundela on Friday afternoons and children were unsupervised in our grounds.

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

You are asked to note that 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 use the front door and report to reception.

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.

Outdoor Notice-Boards

Please remember to check the information which is on the notice-boards on a regular basis. The same information is placed on each notice-board.

Outside Agencies

On occasions outside agencies or groups ask school to distribute information to parents. School does not vet these agencies or take any responsibility for them – we are simply passing on information. It is up to parents to check out these agencies if they wish to use them. We reserve the right to decide whether or not the information is sent out. A selection of leaflets is usually available in the entrance hall.

Dates to Remember

Attached you will find a list of useful dates for this term along with the Term Dates and holidays for this school year. Please keep this sheet for reference.

As indicated during last school year, I will be retiring on 31 October 2019 with the new Principal, Ms S Wilson, taking up her post from 1 November 2019. Thank you for all your support during my time in Dundela. I trust that Ms Wilson will be made to feel welcome and supported as she takes on this new role.

Yours faithfully

S H MACKEY
Principal

DATES TO REMEMBER

MON 9 SEPT	All P1 children 8.55am – 12.00noon
WED 11 SEPT	Last day to pay Milk Money for Term 1 - £13.50 <i>Cheques payable to <u>Education Authority</u></i>
WED 18 SEPT	School Fund due - £6 per family. <i>Cheques payable to Dundela Infants' School</i>
WED 18 SEPT	Information Session for P3 parents 1.30pm
THURS 19 SEPT	Information Session for P2 parents 1.30pm
MON 23 SEPT	P1 Children start packed lunch & dinners -2.15pm finish
THURS 26 SEPT	Information Session for P1 parents 1.30pm
MON 30 SEPT	P3 Homework Club starts (Monday group)
TUES 1 OCT	P3 Homework Club starts (Tuesday group)
WED 2 OCT	P3 Clubs start. All P3 Children finish 3.00pm
MON 7 OCT	School Photographer
THURS 10 OCT	Harvest Assembly
MON 21 – WED 23 OCT	Parent Interviews P1 - P3 children finish school at 1.00pm <u>all week</u> (after school dinner/packed lunch)
MON 28 OCT – FRI 1 NOV	Half Term Holiday.
MON 4 NOV	School Development Day (Staff only to attend)
TUES 5 NOV	School starts
THURS 7 NOV	P2 Trip to Armagh Planetarium
MON 11 NOV	Nursery Waiting Class starts
TUES 3 DEC	Nursery/P1 Open Afternoon/Evening for September 2020 intake
TUES 10 / WED 11 DEC	P1 & 2 Christmas Concert - Tuesday 1.30pm/Wednesday 9.15am
TUES 17 / WED 18 DEC	P3 Christmas Nativity - Monday 1.30pm/Tuesday 9.15am
FRI 20 DEC	Last day of Term (No Uniform) Christmas Fun Morning School finishes 12.15pm No dinners or packed lunches
MON 23 DEC – FRI 3 JAN	Christmas Holidays
MON 6 JAN	Term 2 starts

