

EDUCATION AUTHORITY SOUTHERN REGION

Principal

Mr K D Campbell B.Ed. (Hons),
PQH (NI).



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1 September 2021

Dear Parent,

It's difficult to believe the summer is at an end! We hope you've had a relaxing break and were able to enjoy some quality family time together.

We'd like to provide some useful information to parents.

- **School routines** – recent DE guidance stated that schools should make their own decision on whether to continue the use of protective 'bubbles.' The guidance states the need for schools to adopt a careful and measured approach that still seeks to maximise the time pupils are within a consistent group. You will also be aware that local cases of COVID are quite high again and may rise even further due to schools reopening. Obviously, we all wish to return to normal routines as soon as possible but given the circumstances we feel it's better to be cautious at this point. Having discussed this among staff we have decided to continue the use of bubbles for now and re-evaluate the situation in a few weeks. We trust parents will understand this decision has been taken with the safety of our school community in mind.
- **A PHA Flowchart for close contacts** has been placed on our school website under 'Helpful for Parents.' This is a helpful guide as to what action is required should someone in your house be a close contact. We would also remind parents that pupils awaiting PCR test results should not be in school.
- Our school opening time remains at 9:00am and we would stress that no pupils should be in school before this time as we are unable to provide supervision. P1-3 finishing time is 2:25pm and p4-7 pupils will go home at 3:25pm. All pupils will be brought to the school gate.
- We would encourage you to avail of our excellent Breakfast Club (8:15-9:00am) and P1-3 After School Club (2:25-3:25pm), led by Mrs Ewart. Many of our parents find these facilities convenient and affordable (£2.00 per pupil per day) and the children really enjoy what's on offer.

- We also wish to remind you of our **2021-22 class arrangements**:

Class	No of pupils
P1-2	18
P3-4	18
P5-6	15
P7	14
Total	65

- **P1 Intake** – we are delighted to welcome our 8 new P1 pupils into the school and trust they will quickly settle and become part of our school community. A special welcome must also go to the Reid, Murphy and Martin families whose Drumhillery journey begins this year. We hope you will feel most welcome.
- **School Fund payments** are due by Monday 20 September. I have forwarded a payment envelope to each family for convenience. Again we would like to stress this is a voluntary donation, however it really does enable us to provide a better quality education for your child as we can purchase resources not normally available through the school budget. This year School Fund money will go towards a third Interactive white board as we seek to equip every classroom with a new IMEX Classroom Touch Panel, additional reading books and storage for PE equipment. We appreciate your support.
- **Spelling Scheme** – we plan to introduce a new spelling program in school this year called The CSP Spelling and Language Program. We believe it will have many benefits for the children. The CSP is a widely researched and popular program which caters for all abilities in the classroom, placing a high emphasis on rhyme patterns, High Frequency Words and Dictation. Teachers will provide more detailed guidance for parents on how the scheme operates.
- **Engage Program** – you may recall we commenced our Engage program last year in Term 1 before the second lockdown disrupted our plans. We intend to recommence the program week beginning 20 September and any pupils involved last year will automatically be selected this year, together with additional children selected by the teachers as requiring support. The main aim of the program is to help those children who were adversely affected by the school closures due to COVID-19. Mrs Bruce and Mrs Boyd will oversee the program as before.
- **Hockey**
P5-7 hockey commences with Christine Russell (Armagh Hockey Club) on Wednesday 15 September, at a cost of £1.50 per week (or a one off payment of £15 for 10 sessions). The children may bring their own sticks or borrow from the school. The school PE kit should be worn, ie green polo shirts or navy sweatshirts, and navy shorts/skirt/jogging bottoms. Gum shields and shin guards are also required.
- **PE Days** are as follows this year:

P1/2	Tuesday & Thursday
P3/4	Monday & Wednesday
P5/6	Wednesday & Friday (Terms 1 & 3)
P 7	Wednesday & Friday (Terms 1 & 3)

- Our second **IMEX Classroom Touch Panel** will be installed in Mr Campbell/Mrs Bruce's room later this month and training will be provided for staff in its use. We have also recently received 6 new Desktop Computers and 4 laptops as part of the C2k refurbishment. We also were able to obtain 6 new ipads, courtesy of an ABC Community Grant which Parents of Drumhillery (POD) applied for on behalf of the school.
- **School Holidays**
With this correspondence I have enclosed a holiday list for this academic year. Please keep this carefully. A copy has also been posted on the school website.
- **Charity** - please note the annual RAF Wings Appeal will be in school next week (6-10 Sept), should anyone wish to make a donation.
- **Photographs**
Please note that the Ulster Gazette photographer will be in school on Wednesday 8 September to take a photo of our new P1 pupils.
- **AQE Assessments** will take place on 20 and 27 November and 4 December 2021. We intend to commence AQE After School Club on Tuesday 6 September. A reminder that applications for registration close on Friday 24 September. Further details are available on the AQE website.
- If you have not yet made an application for Home to School Transport and are eligible, please do so on the EA website as soon as possible. On the main EA site simply search for 'Home to School Transport and follow the steps outlined. You may also contact the Home to School Transport Helpline on 0300 200 7824.
- If you think you may be eligible for Free School Meals/Uniform allowance and have not yet completed your application, again we would request this is done at your earliest convenience. Both the paper-based form and online form are accessible from the EA website – <https://www.eani.org.uk/financial-help/free-school-meals>

Yours faithfully,
K D Campbell
Principal.

