



Gortin Primary School

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Dear Parent

A warm welcome to all our new children and families and to our present families a big thank you for your continued support over the last academic year. We appreciate all the work you do both for your children and for our school. I trust everyone has had a restful summer. With the new school year just round the corner the following news sheet provides you with key school information, dates and arrangements in school for the term ahead. Just a reminder that our fortnightly newsletter will be published on our website but if you have any difficulty accessing this just call school to request a paper copy.

School Times

Classes commence at **9.15** am. Children should not arrive at school before 8.55 am when teacher supervision commences.

Formal lessons for Y1 will finish at 12 noon from 3 – 7 September then Y1 will finish at 1pm the following week (10 - 14 September) as a settling in period and thereafter the same as Y2/ Y3 whose day ends at 2.05 pm each day. In the best interest of all children I would encourage you to collect your child/children at the end of formal lessons. However, if you are unable to do so Mrs Hempton is available to supervise these children until 3.05 pm at the following charges payable weekly or monthly.

After School Club Charges

1 Child	Daily Rate £2.00	2 Days £4.00	3 Days £6.00	4 Days £8.00	5 Days £10.00
2 Children	£4.00 (£2 per Child)	£8.00	£12.00	£14.00	£16.00

Please send colouring/activity books for this time.

Parents waiting to collect children at 2.05 pm please remain in back porch and Mrs Dixon/Mrs Hempton will bring children out.

Classes & Teaching Staff

Mrs Dixon – Y1, Y2.....16 pupils

Mrs Allen – Y3, Y4.....19 pupils

Mrs Wallace – Y5, Y6 & Y7.....20 pupils

Y1 – Y3 will cease formal lessons at 2.05 pm, as recommended by the Department of Education. This will allow redeployment of Mrs Dixon. Y3 will have play based learning on 2 mornings per week.

Y5 will join Y4 in Mrs Allen’s room in the afternoons from 2-3pm when Y3 go home. I will be taking a half day Principal’s release for administration per week.

Classroom Assistants/Secretary

Mrs Hempton has 15 hours Y1 classroom assistant hours. Mrs Tuohey has 25 hours’ special needs classroom assistant in Y3-Y4 classroom and Miss Barr will be special needs/classroom assistant for 22.5 hours’ in

Mrs Dixons classroom. Our classroom assistants have received Reading Partnership training and as a result we will be releasing them from class to give targeted support to children in Y3-7 who would benefit from additional reading support according to our data.

Mrs Whelan has 12 hours (10am – 2pm) secretarial duties on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday and would appreciate your co-operation with the following arrangements.

- All monies to be sent to school on **Mondays only** (as there will be no staff available to collect any other day) in yellow money envelope available from school at £3.00, (***please note that this is the only way we wish to receive monies!***) clearly marked with child’s name and relevant boxes and amounts ticked.
- If you need to contact school, please ring between 8.45 - 8.55 am. After 8.55 am staff will be supervising children as they arrive. I would appreciate if you would avoid telephone calls after 9.00 am. School staff may be contacted again after 3.15 pm if necessary. **OF COURSE URGENT CALLS MAY BE MADE AT ANY TIME OF THE DAY.** A member of staff will be delegated to answer the telephone.

- If you wish to talk to a member of staff in person, please ring to arrange a mutually convenient time. Staff may not leave children unattended and are not available during the school day.
- If a child has to leave school early for any reason, please forward a note to his/her class teacher this may warrant a ½ day absence as attendance is recorded twice a day. (Attendance policy available).
- If your child is ill/unable to attend school, please inform the school on the first morning of their sickness and send a note indicating the duration/reason for the absence as soon as they return
- Staff will have to do a meals check daily so that school dinners can be ordered before 9.45 am each day.

Uniform

The wearing of school uniform is a very important aspect of school life and I ask for your cooperation in ensuring that your child wears the proper uniform each day. There will be an inspection on **Monday 10 September** to ensure all school uniform is named permanently (please note biro/pen washes off quite quickly) and termly thereafter to check that all clothing bears the child's name. This is to avoid the loss of school uniform and the extra work involved looking for lost garments. All children to wear **black shoes, not trainers**, and velcro closing for those who cannot tie laces. Non-marking trainers for PE or black plimsolls.

Don't forget about our PTA uniform recycling initiative, if your child outgrows uniform you may leave it freshly laundered into school at any time, likewise if your child outgrows/ damages their uniform you can call in to see what we have available for replacement at a small charge which goes to our PTA funds. We have a good selection at present if parents would like to call this week when staff are in school.

Homework

I would ask you to become involved with your child's homework. Please discuss/help but don't do. Please sign written homework nightly. When helping your child with their spellings please encourage them to use the strategy of LOOK, SAY, COVER, WRITE, and CHECK. Writing out their spelling has been proven to increase their ability to recall the spelling and to use it accurately at a later date in their writing Please sign Y1/Y2 reading records & Y3/Y4 reading records nightly and Y5/Y6/Y7 homework diaries weekly

Curriculum Development

Teachers will adopt the modelled/shared/guided approaches in the teaching of reading and writing in line with N.I. 2009 Curriculum statutory requirements. The focus will continue to be on developing understanding and teaching reading and writing strategies in class. Children will be taught to write for a variety of purposes/styles and to write more creatively and with expression. Children will continue to be encouraged to read nightly both set reading and personal reading. Please take time to listen to your child read, supporting errors/omissions in the text and talking about the content/meaning throughout their primary years. This year a focus for improvement is the development of poetry and rhyme skills so this will be particularly important.

We introduce Jolly Phonics in Year 1/2 and letter sounds are taught first with letter names coming later in Year 1/2. Linguistic Phonics are taught for Y 3 – Y7 as a programme for teaching the skills of reading and writing throughout the school and words from this programme are added to their nightly spellings. Children are taught not just the alphabet sounds but the 42 main letter sounds in the English language (including blending) and how they are written, encouraging earlier independent reading and writing. We intend to hold a parent workshop at our annual parents meeting in September to further support/explain how parents can support their child's learning within their individual classroom settings.

Staff will continue to use our PATHS programme (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) to reinforce further pupil's positive behaviour but also to enhance self-esteem/self-confidence, improve communication about emotions and feelings, enhance motivation, improve logical reasoning, improve problem solving and increase respect for others. Staff have been trained by a PATHS coach and this is a Barnardo's initiative. This is in keeping with our school's positive behaviour management and the prevention of bullying behaviours but also with mindfulness of the importance of promoting good mental health. This programme was very favourably commented upon by the DENI inspectors.

Emphasis will also continue on investigative mathematical problem solving with the use of IZAK 9 which is a fun practical resource which enables the teacher to incorporate problem solving mathematical activities in a progressive and reinforcing manner from Y1 to Y7. We are also using a recently purchased Active Primary Maths scheme for the N.I. Curriculum and are building maths games resources recommended to help increase the children's practical investigative skills.

Developing the quality of support given to children with Special Needs through our policies and practices will also continue to be a strong focus over the next few years as the new SEN Bill becomes statutory and Mrs Wallace will attend training and disseminate to all staff to ensure we are meeting the needs of all our children.

Another area for development will be using our ICT suite/ I Pads to provide ICT tasks including Animation Skills which Y3-Y5 will develop through their Shared Education Programme which will develop progressive ICT skills in the Y1-Y7 classes. We have also been producing a Year by Year overview of tasks to be completed. Staff and pupils will receive support in this so teachers can report with confidence the levels children are achieving at the end of Key Stage 1 & 2 (Y4 & Y7) in ICT.

Golden Time

We will continue to operate Golden Time as part of our Positive Discipline Policy. Children may bring in an educational game for this time e.g. Connect 4, Snakes & Ladders, Scrabble and Technology Kits or use educational games/ICT programmes already in the school. For this to operate effectively please avoid making appointments and collecting your children from school at this time. Game Boys, Play Stations and Mobile Phones are strictly forbidden. Golden Time will operate for 30 minutes on a Friday afternoon.

Healthy Breaks

We are a health promoting school and operate a healthy break policy at 10.45 – 11.00 am within the school and do not allow chocolate, sweets, crisps or sugary drinks at this time. Children in Y4- Y7 are given a choice of up to 4 different kinds of fruit. Y1& Y2 have a healthy sit down snack which they help to prepare and clear away which can include a fruit snack and other healthy options such as toast, muffins, sandwiches, pancakes, crackers, cheese and a drink of milk.

We are also hoping to continue our healthy lunch boxes. Please encourage children to bring a healthy sandwich/roll/wrap, piece of fruit/vegetable and low sugar/salt bar or snacks and sugar free drink. We do spot checks to encourage and reward children who are choosing healthy foods for lunch. Habits encouraged now will help form healthy bodies and minds for the future.

Milk Y3 – Y7

If your child wishes to take milk, please send £8.20. This covers months September and October.

Fruit Y3 – Y7

Y3 – Y7 please send in £10.25. This covers September and October.

Y1 & Y2 Snack Only

Please send in £12.30 to cover months September & October.

Y1 & Y2 Snack & Milk

Please send in £14.35 to cover months September & October.

****ALL MONIES TO BE RECEIVED ON MONDAY 3 SEPTEMBER****

Please note that we do not give credits for milk/fruit if your child is absent.

Meals

Our healthy dinners were favourably commented upon by the inspectorate. Children are offered a healthy main course plus side salad, slice of bread/roll, a glass of milk and dessert/fruit. At £2.60 per day they are excellent value at just £13.00 per week.

Monday's dinner will consist of Sausages/Fishfingers & new menu will be issued on Monday.

Water

Children do not need to carry water to school as we have Rockwell water drinkers installed in all the classrooms ensuring a chilled supply of water for our children. Recent research has proven children who are well hydrated can concentrate better and do better at work. Encourage them to use this facility.

School Photographer – Monday 10 September

La Fayette Photography will be in school to take photographs on the above date with prices starting at £6.50. Proofs will be sent out for your approval and there is no obligation to purchase. Parents who wish to bring along pre-school children may arrive from 9.00 am onwards. Please indicate on attached letter if you wish to have photos taken.

Holidays

Attached list to help parents with forward planning.

After School Activities

An Ulster Scots application for funded dance/chanter has been successful again this year. More details will follow possibly commencing on the week beginning 10 September.

A Class will be taken by Mrs Wallace for Y7 pupils sitting the Common Entrance Assessment.

Please note Tuesdays 3.15pm - 4.15pm

Harvest Service

Our annual Harvest service will be held on Friday 12 October at 1.15 pm when our children will perform a variety of songs and prayers. Each child is asked to bring an item to sell i.e. fruit, vegetables, flowers, plants, etc. which will be sold to parents and friends present. This year we will be supporting a charity at home. Suggestions should be made to and agreed by PTA.

PTA/Parents Information Night – Monday 24 September

Our first PTA (Parent/Teacher Association) meeting is planned for 7.00 pm to elect office bearers and committee. All parents very welcome to attend and get involved in fund raising with so many cutbacks in education this is an essential part of enrichment for the children's learning but also an opportunity to organise fun community and family events. Please do join us as we always welcome new ideas and new faces to our PTA.

Our Information Night will commence at 8.00pm and will consist of a short discussion on the year ahead. This will be followed by workshops in each of the classrooms and an opportunity for parents to get informed about what their child will be learning in their own classroom. (Further information will also be sent out in Home school link letters Bi Monthly) and how you can support this at home. This has been designed to meet the needs of parents as indicated on the parent questionnaires. Mrs Dixon's workshop will run from 8.05 – 8.25 pm and Mrs Allen's 8.25- 8.45 pm and Mrs Wallace's 8.45 – 9.05 pm. Tea and coffee will be available while waiting. Please let us know in the coming weeks if there is anything in particular you would like addressed in this workshop as teachers will be planning their workshop in advance and time is limited.

Staffing

We require a dining room supervisor for 1 hour per day (12.15 – 1.15) if anyone is interested or knows of anyone who might be interested. This would be on a paid capacity. Also we would again appreciate parental voluntary assistance with the swimming group who will be going weekly until Christmas on a Thursday 9.40 – 11.30 am (Please contact Kerry Crawford even if you could do one or two weeks).

Welcome back to Mrs Tuohey after her accident she has been very much missed. Congratulations to Mrs Allen and her husband who are expecting their second child. She will be going off on maternity leave in November and we are delighted that Mrs Allison will be covering her class.

Parent Interviews

Interviews will be held after school week commencing Monday 22 October. Individual notices will be sent out for each child giving the time allocated. These will give you an opportunity to discuss your child's progress. If you have a day/time preference, please inform us in advance of planning. Parents will also be given an opportunity in February for an update on progress.

School Premises

We are delighted with all the development in our school grounds which has allowed our children to participate in growing and tending and sampling home grown produce and developing an opinion and say in the running of their school. To receive runner up to the Best Kept School Award in the Western Board Area for the second time is a wonderful achievement having won it last year. We hope to continue and to build on this good practice. Thank you to those parents who kindly watered flowers over the summer months & to Mrs McFarland & Mrs Allison who weeded and attended plants.

Outdoor Play as recommended by the Revised Curriculum for N.I.

Y1- Y3 will have 35 minutes' outdoor play 1 morning per week.

It is essential that all children have a coat in school each day as all children will be participating in outdoor play each day in our well-equipped playground and Y1/Y2/Y3 should have wellingtons also. Otherwise on cold/wet days' children cannot go outside and there is still lots of fun and healthy learning activities to participate in on those days.

Y1 Baseline Assessment

This will be carried out during September for Y1 pupils. Mrs Dixon will meet with parents during September to discuss your child's starting point at school and an invitation to attend this meeting and discuss your child will be sent out with your child shortly. Feedback on progress will then be given to parents at the October parent interview.

CASE Peace IV Shared Education Programme – Y3/Y4/Y5

Y3-Y5 will continue to work with St. Patricks and St. Peters in a Shared Educational programme this year which will be fully funded. More details later.

Parking/Access to School

Parents collecting children at 3.05pm should park in the parking bays or only on the left hand side of the driveway (on your way out) or outside the gates to keep the route in and the roundabout free for the school buses to come in pick the children up safely and continue round the roundabout and exit without any obstruction.

School gates will continue to be closed at 10.00 am for the children's safety and we will endeavour to have these opened for 2.05pm when Y1-Y3 day ends. The side gate will always be closed but not locked for entry. All parents collecting/leaving their children to go to the **back porch** of the school. Doors will be locked but by pressing buzzer a member of staff will be alerted and will let you gain entry. It is essential that we are aware of changes for the collection of children i.e. whenever someone unknown to the school is collecting a pupil, especially in the case of younger children. Any parent who wishes their child to walk to or from school should inform the school in writing and ensure their child is well versed on safety on the road.

Listening School

We want to be welcoming, approachable and honest about our school and its progress. We want with your help to work together to achieve our best. We want to celebrate its strengths and address areas of dissatisfaction. To do this consultation with pupils, staff and parents need to take place from time to time to help inform our 3-year School Development Plan. Questionnaires are sent out every 3 years and this will be done in April/May of this school year. As a result of our last questionnaire, areas for further development included better communication/relationships with parents in particular on pupil learning and progress and this continues to be a work in progress. Also how parents can support learning at home hence the parent workshop at our information night. Home School Link Letters and an optional additional parent interview in February. We also have a suggestion box at our rear entrance and you may also make an appointment with me at any time to discuss issues confidentially. Please make use of these as we genuinely value your feedback both positive and negative and do act on parental concerns.

Common Entrance Assessment

Y7 children wishing to sit the above tests in Nov/December for entry into Grammar school needs to have registered with the association for quality education (AQE) by Friday 21 September forms have been sent out from school or you can download a form at www.aqe.org.uk

School Website – www.gortinps.com/ Facebook – Gortin Primary School

Please be aware and use our recently updated and informative school website to keep you fully aware of school life. There are a range of school policies including our new Privacy Notice (a requirement of the New General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) published in May 2018 for all the data we hold on your family. Also of interest are colourful photographs of events which the children have participated in. Fortnightly school newsletters are on our website but paper versions can be requested. Regular updates of school/class, photographs, events and achievements will be posted on our school Facebook page co-ordinated by Mrs Allen and Mrs Cooke.

Child Protection

Attached is leaflet on Child Protection for each family and individual children's Medication Needs. Please complete and sign reply slip and return on Monday 3 September.

Bullying Policies/Complaints/Medication Policy

These policies will be on our website (available on request for those unable to access) and should be read, reply slip signed and returned as it is a statutory requirement that parents are fully informed on the school's policy on these issues. Other policies are also available on our website and/or on request.

Data Form

Please check enclosed data form for each child (Y1 receive a blank to register) and return with any changes marked in RED ink on 3 September as this is essential for our school SIMS records and for our school texting service which we use for urgent reminders/messages. Please read Data Protection Statement on back of holiday list.

Please remember to keep us updated on any changes especially mobile number change. Only Y1 are receiving Using Images and Local Studies Walk as we have all pupils from last year on file.

Yours sincerely

Iris Wallace
Principal
Enc.

Reply Slips

Policies

I have read the attached Child Protection policy and the Bullying, Complaints and Medication online.

Signed:.....Parent PRINT:.....

.....

SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPHER SLIP – PLEASE TICK APPROPRIATE BOX

NAME	SINGLE	FAMILY

Signed:.....Parent PRINT:.....

GORTIN PRIMARY SCHOOL
HOLIDAY LIST – 2018/2019

MONDAY 3 SEPTEMBER.....FIRST DAY OF TERM

MONDAY 1 OCTOBER..... SDD

WEDNESDAY 31 OCT – FRIDAY 2 NOV.....HALLOWEEN

MONDAY 5 NOVEMBER.....SDD

MONDAY 24 DEC- WEDNESDAY 2 JANUARY.....CHRISTMAS

THURSDAY 3 JANUARY.....SDD

FRIDAY 4 JANUARY.....FIRST DAY OF TERM

MONDAY 18 – WEDNESDAY 20 FEBRUARY.....MIDTERM

MONDAY 18 MARCH.....ST PATRICK’S DAY

THURSDAY 18 APRIL – FRIDAY 26 APRIL.....EASTER

MONDAY 29 APRIL.....SDD

TUESDAY 30 APRIL..... FIRST DAY OF TERM

MONDAY 6 MAY.....BANK HOLIDAY

THURSDAY 16 MAY.....SDD

FRIDAY 17 MAYBALMORAL

MONDAY 27 MAYBANK HOLIDAY

FRIDAY 28 JUNE.....LAST DAY OF TERM

• SDD = STAFF DEVELOPMENT DAY