



Gortin Primary School

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Principal: Mrs J Wallace

22 August 2024

Dear Parent,

A welcome back to school to all our children and families. I trust everyone has had a pleasant summer break. A special welcome to our new member of the teaching staff Mr Barbour appointed to the Y6/7 classroom on 4 days per week. The following news sheet provides you with key school information and arrangements in school for the year ahead.

School Times

Classes commence @ 9.15 am for all Year Groups next week Monday 2 September 2024 (**supervision commences no earlier than 8.55am and children should not be in school before this time except in exceptional circumstances and agreed in advance with the school.**) Transport as usual. Children should continue to bring a healthy prepared snack of fruit/veg only (a buttered pancake or cracker if your child has missed breakfast) as we wish to maintain our healthy snacks policy. No chocolate or cereal bars, fridge raiders etc. as these are not healthy options. These will be monitored, and we ask for your support to encourage fruit and vegetables only.

Children should attend school in their PE kit on their two PE days (plus Relax Kids when it commences). We would like all children to continue to wear full school uniform on all other days which includes their black school shoes as we want to maintain the smart appearance of our school uniform. Please make sure all uniform is clearly marked permanently with their names (not just written in pen).

Pupils will be told what days they have PE on return to school and should only wear their school polo PE shirt, plain navy track bottoms (no branded track bottoms), grey school sweatshirt, or red school sports hoodie.

Meals will be available (See school website for menu). Lunch boxes should be named clearly. Parents wishing to speak with staff should do so by prior arrangement. All children will enter and exit school via the back door.

Formal lessons for Y1 will commence 9.15 am finish at 12.15 from 2-6 September then Y1 will stay for lunch the following week (9-13 September) finishing at 1.30 as a settling in period. Thereafter they will be 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 in these weeks. However, if you are unable to do so Mrs McCormack is available to supervise these children 2.05- 3.05 pm. **Please note charges which must be paid in advance weekly, stating clearly which days your child will be staying. Any changes to this should be notified in writing.**

After School Club Charges

1 Child	Daily Rate £2.50	2 Days £5.00	3 Days £7.00	4 Days £8.00	5 Days £10.00
2 Children	£5.00 (£2.50 per Child)	£10.00	£13.00	£14.00	£16.00

Please send colouring/activity books for this time.

Parents waiting to collect children at 2.05 pm please remain in the playground and Mrs Hawkes/Mrs McCormack will bring the children out.

Classes & Teaching Staff

Mrs. Hawkes – Y1/2/3	17 pupils (CA Mrs. McCormack)
Mrs. Allen – Y3/4/5	24 pupils (CA Mr. Lervy)
Mr Barbour – Y6/7	24 pupils (CA Mrs Tuohey)

Y1 – Y3 will cease formal lessons at 2.05 pm, as recommended by the Department of Education. This will allow redeployment of Mrs Hawkes.

Mrs Allen will continue her 4-day week contract and Mrs Caroline Gregson will teach Y4/5 on Thursdays. Mrs Allen as Co-principal will cover Principal duties on Monday & Wednesday.

Mrs Wallace phasing into retirement will be working 3 days per week. 2 days Principal release in the office (Tuesday & Thursday) and 1 day teaching in Y6/7 room (Friday)

Secretary

Mr Lervy who is covering Mrs Whelan's sick leave will have 12 hours secretarial duties. We have limited staffing for answering phone calls etc. during teaching time please be patient and only make essential calls.

- All monies to be sent to school on **Mondays only or 1st day after a closure** 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. **Payment must be made in advance for dinner, milk and After schools as per our Non-Payment Policy.**
- 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.**
- If you wish to talk to a member of staff in person, please ring to arrange a mutually convenient time.
- If a child must leave school early for any reason, please forward a note to his/her class teacher. (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 do meal checks daily so that school dinners can be ordered before **9.45 am** each day.

Attendance

Every single day a child is absent from school equates to a day of lost learning. Please encourage your child to come to school every day unless sick or attending a medical appointment and give your child the best start in life. Pupils are expected to be in school, seated at 9.15am for registration and the beginning of classes. Lateness (after 9.20) is recorded at registration and on your child's attendance record. If your child appears reluctant to attend school, please discuss the matter promptly with their class teacher or principal to ensure we can give both you and your child the best support.

Homework

School bags are required daily. Clear wipeable folders to carry HW/Reading books from home to school is still recommended and well-equipped pencil cases. Children in Y1/2 pencil cases should include 2 pencils, 1 pack of thick jumbo size colouring pencils and 1 glue stick. One pencil has already been given to Y1. These pencils designed to encourage good grip and pencil control can be purchased in school for £2. Y3-Y7 should have 2 pencils, 1 rubber, 1 sharpener, 1(15cm) ruler 1 pack colouring pencils, 1 pack of felt tip markers, 1 glue stick. Y5-Y7 also need 2 Blue Frixion erasable writing Pens (available in school @£2 each) in their school pencil case. Please check pencil cases and replenish regularly throughout the year to avoid disruption to their education.

All items, including individual pencil/pens should be named. HW will be set nightly Mon - Thurs with one relaxed fun homework monthly as requested by the Students Council.

I would ask you to become involved with your child's homework. Please discuss/help/practice examples but do not do. Please sign written homework. 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 in their writing. Please sign Y1/Y2 Homework Cover page daily, Y2/3 HW Sheets or Homework Diary daily & Y3/Y4 Reading records nightly and Y4-Y7 Homework diaries & Reading Records weekly

Curriculum Development

There will be a full delivery of the NI Curriculum. Staff will continue to use our PATHS programme to enhance self-esteem/self-confidence, and mental health through communication about emotions and feelings and increasing respect for each other and Relax Kids (pending continued funding) to reinforce further pupil's physical and overall mental health through various exercise and relaxation techniques.

We will continue to use assessment data to address the children's needs with an emphasis on Literacy, Numeracy, ICT and WAU (World Around us). We will be using PTA funds to purchase online resources and training to support teaching and learning and to extend and improve our Computer Suite facilities.

We will continue to develop the quality of support given to children with Special Needs and learning support requirements through our policies and practices and this will also continue to be a strong focus over the next years as the SEN Bill becomes statutory and Mrs Hawkes (Learning Support Co-Ordinator (LSC), Mrs Allen, Mr Barbour and myself will attend training as necessary to ensure we are meeting the statutory needs of all our children.

Golden Time

We will continue to operate Golden Time as part of our Positive Discipline Policy for 30 minutes on a Friday afternoon. 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.

Milk Y1/Y2

If your child wishes to take milk, please send £4.20. This covers months September and October.

Milk Y3 – Y7

If your child wishes to take milk, please send £8.40. This covers months September and October.

Meals

Meals are £2.60 per day, £13.00 per week. See the dinner menu on our website.

We would ask parents to order and pay in advance weekly for meals on a Monday for the week ahead to keep monies balanced.

****ALL MONIES TO BE RECEIVED ON MONDAY 2 SEPTEMBER****

Hygiene & Physical protection

To prevent the spread of cold and flu we will be asking our pupils to wash hands regularly throughout the day. Please reinforce the importance of using a tissue and immediate disposal. We would ask all **parents to provide a box of tissues per child** which should be handed in to their teacher, this will ensure a plentiful supply of tissues throughout the year.

Water

Children should continue to bring a named, plastic drinker filled with water only which they can then top up with a chilled supply of water in their classroom throughout the week. Recent research has proven children who are well hydrated concentrate better and do better at work. These should be taken home for thorough washing.

Photographs

La Fayette Photography will be in school on Tuesday 17 September and will take photographs of all the children and send home proofs of both individual and group photos to be purchased online. Year 1 first class and Year 7 last class photograph will also be taken at this time. It is entirely your choice, there is no obligation to purchase. Younger/older siblings should come into school from 9am if parents wish to include them in their family photographs.

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 free for the school buses to enter the roundabout to pick the children up safely and continue round the roundabout to exit. School gates will continue to be closed at 10.30 am for the children's safety and opened for 2.05pm when Y1-Y3 day ends. The side gate will always be closed, but not locked for entry during the day.

Parental Communication

Please be aware and use our informative school website www.gortinps.com to keep you fully aware of school life. There are a range of reviewed and amended school policies. **Monthly Newsletters are on our website (a text and link will be sent to inform of their availability), also available via a link on our Facebook Page (paper version available only if unable to access).** Note this is password protected for child protection purposes and we would ask this is not shared outside of our school community. The password will be text to you please keep it safely. Regular updates of school/class, photographs, events, and achievements will be posted on our school Facebook page.

A Parental Questionnaire was sent out in the summer term to give parents an opportunity to give feedback on their satisfaction with school or any suggestions which can help inform our School Development Plan but also to ensure we are creating an emotionally and physically safe, warm, caring and supportive environment in which teaching and learning are taking place and we meet our legal obligation, while fulfilling our school Mission Statement – 'Working together to Achieve Our Best'. A summary of the findings will be shared with you in September.

Child Protection

A Short Child Protection policy leaflet for each family (full version available on our website) will be forwarded on the first day of term. Please read and sign reply slip and return on Monday 2 September in an envelope with other slips. Please note as per our E-policy (available on our website), photos taken of your children (which you have given written permission to be posted) are taken by a staff member and sent to a designated teacher then deleted from their device, they are then posted by the designated teacher on our FB/Website and deleted from their phone also. No photos of children are stored on personal devices. The designated teacher for child protection is Mrs L Allen and the deputy designated teacher/Principal is myself Mrs I Wallace. The designated governor is Mrs J Crawford.

Bullying Policies/Complaints/Medication Policy

These policies will be on our website (available on request for those unable to access) and should be read. Please sign reply slip to be sent home on 2/9/24 to confirm that you have read them. Other policies are also available on our website and/or on request.

Data /Individual Medical Needs Forms/Acceptable Use Agreement for Internet Y2-Y7

Data, Individual Medical Needs, and Acceptable Use Agreement for Internet forms will be given out on Monday 2 September. Please check data form for accuracy and update if necessary. Complete all forms for each child and return in an envelope on Wednesday 4 September as this is essential for our school SIMS records and for our school texting service which we use for urgent reminders/messages. **(Y1 have already completed these).** Please read Data Protection Statement on the back of the Holiday List

Please remember to keep us updated on any changes **especially mobile number changes** as this is our main method of communication.

Daily Medication required e.g. inhalers should be brought into school with a note on their use, on the first day back and kept in school from that point on in a sealed bag for use. Parents should also inform in writing of any medical needs which may arise throughout the school year and ask permission for staff to administer medication if necessary.

Queries

Please contact school if you have any queries/concerns regarding this information.

Thank you for your patience and in anticipation of your support as the children return to school for the new 2024/2025 school year. All the staff look forward to welcoming your children back into school and working with you to achieve the best possible educational experience for your child/ren.

To be sent home with your child 2/9/24

Data Form for each child (to be returned).

Individual Medical Needs Form (to be returned).

Acceptable Use Agreement for the Internet (to be returned).

Reply Slip to confirm you have read the Child Protection/Bullying/Complaints/Medication Policies online (to be returned).

Holiday List 2024/25 (also available on our school website).

Looking forward to seeing all the children back in school Monday 2 September 2024.

Yours sincerely

Iris Wallace

Principal