

Dear Parent

Welcome to 2022-23

30 August 2022



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I should like to extend a warm welcome to each and every pupil back to school and also a very warm welcome to our new families. Today was the first day for the new pupils who have moved to our school and I know they will be made very much at home by their class-mates. We will be welcoming our new P1 children over the coming days. I would like to thank Mr Maginnis who took the P7 Summer School in August. The children all had a great time and there was very positive feedback from the parents.

I am delighted that we can remove the Covid restrictions that have been in place. However, you will know that Covid is still with us in the wider community and the school is continuing to take a prudent approach with the safety of all pupils, parents and staff our top priority.

Our pupils can enter the school grounds from 8.50am with a start time in class at 9am. **Entry will still be by the individual class fire-doors as it was last year.** Visitors to school will still be by appointment only or you can ring the bell in the front foyer to speak to the office.

The school day will end at 12 noon on 30 and 31 August. Cooked School Meals will start on 1 September. From 1 September school will end at 2pm for P2-3 and 3pm for P4-7. P1 have their own arrangements. From 2 September - School ends on Friday afternoons for all pupils (P1-P7 including the LSC) at 2pm. EA Buses/Taxis will start running on 1 September.

Parents are asked to wait at the 'Top Gate' at 2/3pm. Please be courteous and patient and park away from the top of the lane – you may find it simpler to park a little bit away and walk with your child(ren).

Breakfast Club will restart on Tuesday 30 August. It will run from 8.15am-8.50am and the cost will be 50p per day (food extra). **Only Breakfast Club children and EA Bus children (From 1/9/22) will be permitted on school grounds before 8.50am.**

School Dinners will be available from 1 September – Please Note: money is only taken on the First Day of the week. School dinners will be served in the school hall as normal.

Child Protection

Our collective aim as a staff is to ensure that each one of our pupils will learn in a safe and happy environment. If you have any concerns of a pastoral nature or have any worries regarding child protection issues your point of reference is **Mrs Beattie (Designated Teacher)** or **Mrs McClure (Deputy Designated Teacher)** as well as your child's class teacher or myself.

Hygiene Routines

These have helped reduce illness and so pupils will still follow hand washing and sanitising routines and we ask that you please help your child's class with hand sanitiser, liquid soap, and tissues as you so kindly did last year.

Covid Procedures – The restrictions have ended but the health authorities do expect an increase in colds/flu-like virus infections this autumn. If your child appears ill, then please do not send them into school. Please do not give your child Calpol to reduce temperature in the morning and then send them into school.

School Uniform – The children always look very smart in their uniform. They should wear their full school uniforms daily – shirt/tie etc. On the timetabled PE days, they may come into school wearing their PE kit. The class teacher will send home information on the PE days on the first day of school.

ONLINE UNIFORM SUPPLIER!

Order ONLINE at www.downuniforms.co.uk

OR Telephone: 028 4484 2136 or 07904 111 383

This on-line service is available throughout the year.

School Bags / Lunch Boxes / Pencil Cases - may be brought in by pupils

Please Note: P1 and P2 classes will be provided with their own school bags by the school.

Extra-Curricular Clubs

We will start after-school activities (Clubs) later in the term. Further information will be sent home at a later date.

SECURITY OF OUR SCHOOL – NO PARENTAL ACCESS BEYOND THE SCHOOL FRONT ENTRANCE

As you know, we welcome parental involvement in our school life and the development of your child. If you wish to speak to the class teacher, please make an appointment through the office or you can email them – note you may not receive a reply outside of normal school hours. Do not rely on email for an emergency message but telephone the office on 028 44613934.

ALL Parents / Visitors ARE NOT ALLOWED BEYOND THE FOYER OR INTO CLASSROOMS UNLESS ACCOMPANIED. CHILDREN ARRIVING AFTER 9am MUST ENTER BY THE MAIN SCHOOL DOOR.

School Dinners Dinner cheques are payable to: 'Education Authority'. Price £2.60 per day. Each child must bring in correct dinner money or cheque in a SEALED ENVELOPE on Monday mornings ONLY. ONE DINNER MONEY ENVELOPE PER CHILD PLEASE– no splitting of money between siblings in different classes is permitted. – No change will be given or held over for a following week.

From 1 September all children will eat school meals in the Hall.

EA are evaluating an Online Payment System which may be adopted by them for schools if cost-effective.

Children not taking school meals should bring in lunchboxes and filled water bottles.

After School Care Club Starts on 30 August

The ASCC is starting its 17th year and I must commend the professionalism and dedication of the classroom assistants who run it so well. You will be able to have your child looked after by qualified staff in our dedicated **After School Care Room** in the mobile.

The OPENING HOURS will run up until 5.30pm Mon-Fri.

P1-P3 - 2pm-3pm £4 per session

P1-P3 - 2pm-5.30pm £6 per session

NOTE: PRICES UNCHANGED!

P4-P7 - 3pm-5.30pm* £6 per session

NOTE: Parents must ensure that children are picked up by 5.30pm sharp* (AT THE LATEST)

On Fridays Parents who wish to collect their child at 3pm will be charged the normal 2pm-3pm charge of £4.

**A late charge of £6 (per child) will be applied for pick-ups after 5.30pm.*

Sacrament Preparation - We offer parents the opportunity to have their children prepared for First Confession, Holy Communion and Confirmation. Mrs Tumelty will be sending out a letter today to parents who have previously sent their children for Sacrament Preparation and are due to receive a Sacrament in 2023. If you wish your child to avail of this programme and do not receive a letter, please contact Mrs Tumelty as soon as possible.

Healthy Lifestyles

In line with most current educational and medical research we would like parents to continue to encourage children to bring healthier break and lunch options to school. Fruit or a plain biscuit may be a suitable choice.

The Tuck Shop will not be open initially but this will be kept under review. Thought should also be given to the choice of drink you send with your child. **Water bottles must be filled at home each morning, but chilled water is available for the children to top up at school if required.**

NUT FREE! – As we have pupils in our school who have severe nut allergies food/snacks with nut ingredients must not be brought into Downpatrick PS. *(This includes Nutella and similar products.)*

<p>A Pupil School Meal costs £2.60 per day.</p>
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Absence Notes – Parents must contact school by phone or email by 9.15am

The school requires a note or email from the parent or guardian, which should be given to the class teacher after each absence by the pupil. I would ask that parents arrange for family holidays to take place during the school holidays and do not take their children away during term time.

School Holidays

The **22-23 Holiday list** is being sent home today as well.

Staffing for 2022-23

Principal + 11 class teachers + 1 ENGAGE Teacher (15 Classroom Assistants) (as of 24 August 2022)

Teacher	Class	Teacher	Class
K Cooke	P1	E Thompson / A Alexander	P6
K. Fitzsimons	P2	D Maginnis	P7
R Cleland	P3	S Gill	Hedgehogs
C McClure / R Dines	P4	M Bates	Owls
S Tumelty	P5	K Beattie	Squirrels
R Dines	ENGAGE (4 days)	H Montgomery	Foxes

Medical / Contact Numbers

Letters have been sent out which enable you to update details including an email address. Please make sure that the school has up to date medical information if your child has a particular need. Please inform the school if your contact details have changed in any way. You should also include the phone number of anyone who regularly looks after your child after school. Appropriate inhalers should be given to the class teacher. Please make sure that expiry dates have not been exceeded.

Road Safety in the Mornings and Afternoons

**PLEASE DO NOT DRIVE YOUR CAR DOWN THE LANE AT 9AM, 2PM OR 3PM!
CARS ARE NOT ALLOWED ON THE YELLOW LINES OUTSIDE THE GATES**

As you are aware the car access to school is very limited.

Parents are not allowed to use the school staff car park to turn or pick up/drop off their children.

We have a number of EA buses and taxis which need to come down the lane to pick up children. I ask that all other parents park their cars in the car park next to Down High School or at other safe places to park and collect their children on foot.



Please be aware that the traffic wardens patrol regularly and they have ticketed parents' cars in the past. Only use the top pedestrian gate and please take special care while buses/taxis are driving in the lane.

Remember to develop your child's independence! – See the note on the next page!

On a Personal Note:

I am delighted to see everyone back in school for the new year.
All the pupils are looking very well and so smart in their new uniforms and shoes.

As I walked round the rooms today it was a pleasure to see everyone happy and glad to meet up with their friends again and to be able to make new friends with the children who have joined us.

The school is sparkling and bright and ready for our pupils. I must thank Philip, our caretaker and the cleaning staff for their hard work over the summer – the school is looking bright and welcoming.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or queries about school.

Yours sincerely

Niall Stevenson

For the safety of our children and

Developing Independence



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In order to foster independence all children in P2-7 should be encouraged to walk from the top of the lane through the top gate to their classes without parental assistance whether they have travelled by car or on foot.

1. Parents are strongly encouraged to walk their children to and from school wherever possible.
2. **Only buses/taxis should go down the lane to school.**
The buses cannot turn unless they have adequate room.
3. Parents who leave their children to school by car should **not** park their cars and bring the children down the lane to the school but instead try to develop the routine of saying goodbye to the children in their cars and then safely depart.
4. **Parents who walk their children to school should also say goodbye at the school pedestrian gate.**
5. **Entrance to school from 8.50am is through the class access doors. Pupils are not allowed on school grounds before 8.50am unless they are using the Breakfast Club or travel by EA Transport.**
Teachers are in class from 8.40am. Parents who wish to speak to a teacher must make a prior appointment through the school office.
Parents are not allowed into the building unless by prior appointment.
6. **The school day starts at 9.00am depending on your child's class.**
7. Please ensure that your child is in school on time.
The school will issue 'Late Cards' to pupils who are persistently late.
These cards will have to be taken home and signed by parents.

Yours in safety

Niall Stevenson

HOLIDAYS FOR 2022-2023

Dear Parents

30 August 2022

Below are the holidays for the next academic year at Downpatrick Primary School. Parents are requested that any arrangements for family holidays take account of the dates below and these have been issued at this time to allow for such planning. **Downpatrick PS does not condone or sanction family holidays during term-time.** Teachers will not set work for absences of this nature.



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***SDD – School Development Days** – The school currently has five of these throughout the year. To make it easier for parents, we try, where possible, to have these days joining on to existing holidays. However, please note that one or two of these may be subject to change if CCEA or EA training schedules dictate. The school will send out any revisions as soon as we get them.

Yours faithfully

Niall W. Stevenson

Principal

August 2022

Mon-Fri	22-26	'Baker Days' Staff Only (5 days)	
Monday	29	Bank Holiday	
Tuesday	30	School starts at 9am for P2-P7 children (Half Day to 12pm)	NO EA BUS
Wednesday	31	School 9am for P2-P7 children (Half Day to 12pm)	NO EA BUS

September 2022

Thursday	1	School as normal	<i>New P1 intake will have phased start</i>
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October 2022

Friday	28	School closes for all pupils at 1pm (No After School Club)	
Monday	31	Hallowe'en Holidays (One week in total)	

November 2022

Tuesday-Thursday	1-3	Hallowe'en Holidays	
Friday	4	School Closed for pupils - Staff training (SDD 1) *	
Monday	7	School starts back at 9am	

December 2022

Wednesday	21	School closes at 12.10pm (No After School Club)	
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January 2023

Wednesday	4	School Closed for pupils – Staff Training (SDD 2) *	
Thursday	5	Easter Term begins at 9am	

February 2023

Monday	13	School Closed for pupils - Staff training (SDD 3) *	
Tuesday - Friday	14 - 17	Half Term Holiday	
Monday	20	Schools starts back at 9am	

March 2023

Friday	17	St Patrick's Day – School Closed	
Friday	31	School closes at 1pm for Easter Holidays (No After School Club)	

April 2023

Monday	3	School closed for pupils - Staff training (SDD4) *	
Tuesday	4-14	Easter Holidays	
Monday	17	Summer Term begins at 9am	

May 2023

Monday	1	May Day Holiday	
Friday	26	School Closed for pupils – Staff Training (SDD 5) *	
Monday	29	Bank Holiday	

June 2023

Friday	30	Last Day – Finish at 12.10pm (No After School Club)	
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