

BALLYMENA NURSERY SCHOOL

SEPTEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER



Welcome and thank you for choosing Ballymena Nursery School. We are looking forward to getting to know you and hope that the time you and your child/children spend with us will be enjoyable, educational and most importantly, feels like a "safe and caring Nursery School environment".

STAFFING

All change! A number of changes to our staff have been put in place over the summer. We welcome Mrs Minhas to our teaching team. She will teach both a morning and an afternoon class. Mrs. McGall will continue to be our Acting Principal, teaching in the morning time with Mrs Kennedy teaching an afternoon class.

The classrooms will be staffed as follows:-

Morning session - Mrs Minhas (Teacher) assisted by Mrs. Lecky (Nursery Assistant) & Mrs Dewar (additional Support)
Mrs McGall (Teacher) assisted by Mrs. Davis (Nursery Assistant)
Miss Wylie and Mrs McArdle will provide additional support.

Afternoon session - Mrs Kennedy (Teacher) assisted by Mrs. Davis (Nursery Assistant) & Miss Wylie (additional support)
Mrs Minhas (Teacher) assisted by Mrs Dewar (Nursery Assistant) & Mrs McArdle (additional support)

COMING AND GOING @ BALLYMENA NURSERY

We have enjoyed the benefits of the new St Patricks Link road for a year now and have had an official change of address!

Our new address is 12 St Patricks Link, Ballymena, BT43 7FT.

Please be patient and courteous as everyone adjusts to timing their journeys to ensure timely drop offs and pick-ups. Please allow plenty of time for your journey and respect the reserved staff car parking spaces and the designated disabled car parking spaces which should only be used if you hold a disabled parking permit.

SETTLING-IN

We appreciate that often the transition into Nursery can be emotional for both children and parents. We will require flexibility, resilience and a united approach between Nursery staff and parents. Ultimately, working together, our aim will be to settle your child/ren into a safe, secure and happy nursery routine and your support will be very much appreciated. If your child requires a little extra time to settle, we will respond to your child's individual needs, ensuring that all children meet their full potential.

As a staff team, we have noticed the reduction in tummy bugs and illness caused by childhood bugs since we introduced increased handwashing at nursery school during the Covid pandemic. While we love messy play and agree that a good bit of 'clean' dirt never did anyone any harm, this observation means the children will be encouraged to wash their hands on arrival at Nursery school before they commence play, and before snack times.

LEARNING FOCUS FOR SETTLING IN PERIOD

- Focus on attention and listening
- Establish daily routines
- Join in songs/rhymes
- Recognise symbol
- Talk about themselves, family & Nursery
- Able to leave parent calmly
- Learn and use Jenny Mosely's "Golden Rules"

PARENTS' INFORMATION - PARENTS' INDUCTION EVENING (Thursday 12th September)

It is important that parents keep up-to-date with everything which is going on in Ballymena Nursery School.

We will be hosting 2 Parents' Induction Sessions on Thursday 12th September.

Parents of children in the AM classes should attend at 7pm and

Parents of children in the PM classes at 7.30pm. This will be a brief meeting (30 mins) when you will have the opportunity to hear about your child's Nursery year, how to support them and have a child-free chat with the staff. We encourage at least one parent from each family to attend (please leave children at home).

A monthly newsletter is posted on our website and on our Tapestry home/school journal on the first school day of each month, giving all details of important dates and special events to celebrate. PLEASE NOTE THAT WE STRIVE TO BE AN ECO-SCHOOL AND NO FURTHER PAPER COPIES OF THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER WILL BE DISTRIBUTED TO PARENTS. THIS IS THE ONLY PAPER COPY WHICH YOU WILL RECEIVE. It is the responsibility of every parent to access the monthly newsletter via the school website. www.ballymenanursery.co.uk. The website also has a Google Translate facility for a range of languages.

TAPESTRY

Please ensure that you have completed your ICT forms and sign up to Tapestry online learning journal. If you have any ICT queries please contact your class teacher who will try to help.

SCHOOL TEXTING SERVICE

We operate a texting service to communicate important information to all parents. It is essential that you inform us immediately of any changes to your mobile number so that you can be contacted, particularly in the case of an emergency situation. We will send out a test message to one named parent. Please ensure that you save the number to your contact list. Please note that you cannot contact the school using this number - it is only for you to receive messages.

SICKNESS/ABSENCES

Please contact the school (028 2565 2011) if your child is unwell or will be absent for any other reason. Leave a message if the office is not manned. Mrs Craig, our school secretary, works on a part-time basis (Mon-Fri 10am-1pm).

DROP-OFF AND COLLECTION OF CHILDREN

Ballymena Nursery School is a very busy environment; it is not possible to open the classrooms early and we ask that your child is always collected promptly at the end of each session. Staff need time to record observations, carry out cleaning, rotation of resources and preparation in the classrooms between sessions. The main door of the Nursery and the classroom doors will remain closed until the commencement of nursery sessions, both morning and afternoon.

SCHOOL FUND MONEY

Parents are asked to pay £20 per month towards school fund. Please see separate sheet for further payment details. This fund is used for your children, for birthday, Christmas and Easter presents; playdough/baking ingredients/ seasonal bulbs/ seeds, Tapestry fees, printing of photographs for displays (you will receive all display photographs of your child/children) and any other additional day to day expenses.

Please note that school fees cannot be refunded if your child is off ill, or on holidays.

SCHOOL SWEATSHIRTS

School sweatshirts are available in school while stocks last (£13) from the school office. Please remember to label these and any other removable items of clothing - e.g. outdoor coats, wellington boots, etc. with your child's name. You may order name labels directly from www.MyNametags.com, quoting our school ID - 976. Nursery school will benefit from all sales. Pre-loved nursery school sweatshirts are available in Nursery with £5 each towards Nursery school funds. A small number of polo shirts and leggings/joggers are also available for £1 each.

BIRTHDAYS

Every child in Nursery will receive a card and gift on his/her birthday from the Nursery staff and children. The children whose birthday fall in July or August will also receive a birthday card and gift at the end of June 2025.

Due to the increasing number of children presenting with food allergens and intolerance, no birthday cakes will be served in Nursery. However, if you wish to send birthday invitations or small party favours, these can go directly into the children's home time boxes or distributed by your child at the end of their Nursery session.

ITEMS TO BRING TO NURSERY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

Please send a box of tissues and a packet of baby wipes into school with your child; a pair of wellington boots (to be left in Nursery) and a complete change of clothes including underwear and socks (in case they get wet during water play or due to an unexpected toilet accident.) All items **MUST** be clearly labelled with your child's name. We have a total of 104 children in school, so it will be difficult to track down an item, if it is not clearly named.

HOME/SCHOOLBOX

Each child has their own home/school box located on a trolley in the hallway.

Children's artwork and personal belongings are put in these boxes, offering the children opportunities to take ownership of them. Please check your child's hometime box on a daily basis and celebrate their "work". Please remember, it is the "process" of learning rather than the "end product" which is to be celebrated at this age/stage of development.

****Top tip**** - invite your child to tell you about their creation rather than you try to guess!

ALLERGIES

With an increasing number of children presenting with allergies and intolerances and to minimise risk, we ask that children do not bring any foods/drinks to school unless to meet medical/allergen requirements. Please make sure your class teacher is aware of any allergies/food intolerances which your child may have. If your child has asthma and may need to use a "reliever inhaler" (blue) during school, please contact your Dr to request a spare inhaler to be kept in school and speak to your class teacher who will arrange safe storage. You must complete an "administration of medicine" permission slip. Preventative inhalers (brown) should be administered at home.

Why not get involved?

We often need volunteers to help out either on a regular basis e.g. with the children's class library or on an occasional/seasonal basis e.g. wrapping gifts, gardening, sorting resources, working alongside the staff in small group activities with the children. We also encourage you to share any information about hobbies, jobs (especially people who help us) and culture which the children may find interesting. Please don't be shy all these help to enrich the children's learning experiences and their understanding of the World Around Us. If you feel you could contribute in any of these ways or in some other way please either sign up on our Volunteers sheet on the Parent's Board or speak to your child's teacher.

Macmillan Coffee morning/afternoon

We always try to support charity throughout the year at nursery school. While most of our charity events are for children's charities we recognise that cancer affects every family in some way at some stage and so we plan to hold a Macmillan coffee event on Thursday 26th September. Parents are invited to drop their child off at nursery at the usual time and then return 30 mins before the end of their session to enjoy a cuppa and sweet treat before collecting the children. Any donations of food will be gratefully received and any surplus will be sold on Friday 27th September at a bake sale, raising more money for Macmillan.

This will be an outdoor event and so will be weather dependent.

It will also be volunteer dependent as the staff will be busy with the children!

If you feel you could help with the set up/clean up and/or serving tea/coffee or with the bake sale on Friday 27th September, please speak to your class teacher or sign up on our volunteers sheet on the Parent's board.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Thursday, 10 th September	7.00 p.m.	AM Parents' Induction Evening
	7.30 p.m.	PM Parents' Induction Evening
Thursday, 26 th September	10.30 a.m.	Macmillan Coffee morning
	2.15 p.m.	MacMillan Coffee afternoon

ADVANCE NOTICE OF PARENT/TEACHER MEETINGS

Monday, 14 th October	Mrs. Minhas (morning class)
Wednesday 16 th October	Mrs. Minhas (afternoon class)
Thursday 17 th October	Mrs. McGall (morning class)
Friday 18 th October	Mrs. Kennedy (afternoon class)

(Appointment slots will be offered nearer the time).

Please note there will be **no classes** on the day of your child's class parent meetings

ADVANCE NOTICE - ECO SCHOOLS/ ID CLOTHING

We have termly collections for unwanted clothes, toys, bicycles, quilt covers, blankets (no quilts or pillows) books, DVD's, Cd's and bric-a-brac which is collected by ID Clothing. Please support our Environmental recycling (ECO Schools) efforts and save your unwanted items for collection in nursery on Friday 18th October. This is a regular fund-raising event for Nursery funds. Thank you.

CHILD PROTECTION/ SAFEGUARDING

If you have any concerns, please ring Nursery school and contact the
Designated Teacher for Child Protection

- Mrs McGall

or

Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection

- Mrs Minhas

We would encourage you to look and read the summary of our Child Protection Policy which is on our school website (www.ballymenanursery.co.uk).

School telephone number: 028 2565 2011

** Please note that all adults responsible for dropping off and collecting children must be 18 and over.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL & ADDITIONAL NEEDS

Our Nursery School is open to all and if you have any concerns about your child's milestones of development, behaviour, special or individual needs please contact the school office and arrange an appointment with our SENCO, (Special Educational Needs co-ordinator) Mrs. McGall.