



Braidside Integrated Primary and Nursery School

89 Fry's Road, Ballymena Co. Antrim BT43 7EN

1989- 2019: 30 Years of Integration

028 25647899



Principal: J McAuley

www.braidside.co.uk

27/08/2025

Dear Parent/ Guardian,



A new school year!

I hope you have all had a relaxing and enjoyable summer break, even with the unsettled weather this year. We are looking forward to seeing the P2-7 children return to school and to welcoming the P1 and Nursery children to school for the first time. The first few weeks are sure to be busy, as children and staff adapt to their new classes, routines and timetables for the year ahead. For P1 and Nursery, we have shared individual start dates for the children and throughout September we gradually increase their school day to assist with the transition and settling in.

Teachers 2025-26

There are several *staffing changes* happening to make you aware of, for the new school year. Following recruitment at the start of the summer, I am pleased to inform you that Miss Rebecca Barry has been appointed as P5 teacher and will commence teaching on 1st September. With Mrs Fulton and Mrs Horan choosing to make a temporary change to their working commitments for 2025-26, we also welcome Miss Jayne Cruickshank to the school. Miss Cruickshank will work in P2H on Thursday and P6F on Friday. I am certain both teachers will receive a warm welcome to the school community.

School Meals

As we begin the school year, we ask that if your child takes school meals and has any dietary requirements, parents should contact the school office promptly. There are specific forms which parents are required to complete and which will be forwarded to the EA kitchen. We have been provided with an updated list from the EA of all those children entitled to free school meals.

Please note the percentage of free school meals in a school is important data and determines access to funding streams, such as Extended Schools funding. Therefore, we encourage all those who are entitled to receive free school meals to make their online application now if you have not already done so.

New School Year- Meet and Greet!

As with last year, we would like to offer parents the opportunity to meet their new class teacher early in the school term, visit the classroom, pick-up general information and can ask questions in a relaxed and informal capacity. To this end we will be holding sessions as follows:

Session 1 (P1-4M): Tuesday 9th September 2-3.15pm

Session 2 (P5-7): Wednesday 10th September 2-3.15pm
On these days, all children will finish school at 12:15pm.

Parents will initially meet in the assembly hall, prior to moving to the classrooms.

Throughout September, teachers are very much focused on settling in processes, pupil wellbeing, getting to know the children and completing various baseline assessments to ascertain where the children are in their learning. Together with parents, we prioritise making a positive start to the new school year.

Making contact

For general queries, parents may contact the school office or send an email (info@braidsideintegratedps.ballymena.ni.sch.uk). If there is a specific issue concerning your child that you wish to discuss, parents should, in the first instance, make an appointment with the class teacher. The class teacher should be the first point of contact. Appointments are made via email or by contacting the school office.

Parents should ensure that children have information about their afternoon pickups, to avoid telephoning the school office. School and the office staff are busy throughout the day. We appreciate your help in ensuring children have all school materials, lunch/break items and equipment when they come to school.

I encourage parents to visit the website and Facebook page regularly to ensure you are up to date with all relevant information. Please visit your child's class page where teachers may post information, pictures and updates on the work happening in school. Many families have downloaded the SchoolsNI app and this allows us to send alerts to parents when information is placed on the website.

The School Day - Reminders:

School children should arrive from 8:50am, class begins at 9am. Please do not drop off children earlier than scheduled, as children are not supervised outside before 8:50am. Children should be in their classroom by 9am for the morning register and the start of morning routines.

P1-3H enter through the KS1 gate, P3/4C -7 enter at the main entrance.

P1-3 finish school at 2pm. ***We ask that children are collected promptly***, as all teachers have further teaching commitments in the afternoon and office staff are unavailable to supervise.

P4-7 finish school at 3pm.

Please ensure all children are aware of their collection arrangements for 2/3pm. In the case of pupil absences, please ensure class teacher/ office staff are provided with a reason for absence as soon as the child returns to school. Parents and children should aim for a high level of attendance, i.e. above 95%. Regular school attendance and punctuality has a significant impact for pupil progress and all pupil attendance is regularly monitored by the principal.

Medical Matters

At the beginning of the school year, we update all pupil information through the data capture form. We ask that parents check this information thoroughly, provide updated information if necessary and as a priority ensure that contact details are accurate. If children are unwell, we must have accurate details and contact information for each child.

If children have medical conditions these should be recorded by parents on the form.

Additionally, **if your child has asthma**, please ensure inhalers are in school and given to the class teacher for storage in the classroom along with their care plan.

Likewise, it is essential that **any child with specific allergies**, or who use an EpiPen should provide the school (class teacher) with their care plan and EpiPen at the start of the school year.

Finally, at points through the school year, children occasionally may need medication administered e.g., an antibiotic, pain relief. If your child has medication, then contact should be made with the school office and essential documentation completed prior to medication commencing.

We appreciate your cooperation in all matters concerning the children's health and safety.

Breakfast Club will commence on ***Monday 8th September at the new time of 8am.***

Bookings for Breakfast Club must be made/paid a week in advance and sent to the school office. Breakfast Club is available at a cost of £1.50 per day.

Morning Reading Club will commence on ***Monday 9th September @ 8:40am.***

Information about class days will be shared in due course.

Healthy Break

At Braidside, we operate a healthy break policy. Children are encouraged to have fruit, vegetables or bread to eat along with either milk or water to drink. Similarly, children should bring a bottle of water to school to stay hydrated throughout the school day. The Healthy Break Policy is available on our school website to download.

Uniform/ Mobile Phones

Children should wear school uniform every day. The class teacher will inform children/ parents of their PE days/ sessions. Parents were informed of the new School Uniform Policy during the summer term last year and this will be implemented from September. We are grateful for your support and cooperation with the new policy.

Children should not bring mobile phones to school. Make-up and nail varnish (including cosmetic nails) are not permitted in school. For healthy and safety/ hygiene reason pupils with long hair should wear this tied back. Likewise, jewellery should be kept to a minimum (e.g. small pair of stud earrings).

Moving Around the Premises

Parents and children will be aware of our involvement in the Sustrans Active Travel Programme, which promotes active travel to school. We look forward to participating once again in activities throughout this school year.

However, parents should exercise caution when driving on school grounds, particularly in the turning circle and the drop-off spaces around this. ***Parents should avoid stopping mid-way on the turning circle to let children jump out of the car.*** Please use the car park spaces where available, or the layby outside the school. Our busy times are 9am, 2pm and 3pm and we do appreciate your cooperation in ensuring the safety of the children and pedestrians.

For those walking, please use the footpaths and avoid walking through the planting areas. In these first few days we anticipate the grounds being busy and while everyone becomes accustomed to arrival and collection routines. For the P4-7 children who finish the day at 3pm, please ensure they know their collection arrangements and any meeting point on the grounds.

At the start of every school year, we look forward to the children returning to school and the busy and exciting first few weeks. There is always lots of information to share, and we are grateful for your help in returning any forms, data capture information and medical details promptly. If you do have any queries, please contact the school office and we will assist as best we can.

We look forward to a positive and engaging school year. We will continue to keep parents abreast of events and activities in school and we thank you for your continued support.

Yours faithfully,

J McAuley

Principal.