



December Newsletter

Dear Parents,

Over the past few weeks there has been much uncertainty regarding schools closing for the Christmas break. Last week (8th Dec) we received a letter from Minister Weir indicating that there are no plans to extend the break in schools, and that, unless there is advice from the PHA, the expectation is that “all schools should remain open to all year groups for face-to-face teaching for the remainder of this term until their planned Christmas holiday”. In line with this guidance, we will be operating as usual through the last week of term. Our last day is **Friday 18th December** and we will have staggered home times in place to facilitate a safe and socially distant departure for all pupils on that day. Times are as follows:

Nursery: 11:30am
Group A-F: 11:50am
Group G-J: 11:55am
Group K-McL: 12:00pm
Group McM-R: 12:05pm
Group S-W and Bus children: 12:10pm

Since the autumn half-term, we have had members of the school community undergo testing and isolation and we are very grateful for the swift communication from parents and guardians, which enables us to take the necessary steps, complete risk assessments and compile documentation in school. We continue to follow all the necessary guidance from the PHA and EA and maintain the Covid-19 measures in school. For those class bubbles which have had to isolate, we have put online learning in place through Seesaw and Teams; this has been invaluable in ensuring the continuation of learning and teaching.

If your child is unwell and displaying any symptoms, please do not send them to school. In the situation where a child or family member is awaiting test results, all are required to self-isolate. Parents/ guardians should contact the school either by telephone (25647899) or via email (info@braidsideintegratedps.ballymena.ni.sch.uk) to provide this important information.

The BIPS Remote Learning Policy has been uploaded to the school website for all parents. Thank you once again, for your help and cooperation throughout this term. In such challenging and unprecedented times, it is essential that we work together and support each other as a school community.



Christmas Celebrations

Over the last few weeks, the school has had a wonderful Christmas atmosphere. We enjoyed Christmas Jumper Day, the Lunch Party boxes and classes have been focused on preparing short excerpts, songs and recitals. These performances were recorded and some are on the school website for parents to view, others will be uploaded in the week ahead. We hope you enjoy them. The children have also enjoyed lots of art and fun Christmas activities in class and hopefully they will also do so in the week ahead.

Book Fair



Book Fair took place in November and I am pleased to say, following sales of £1200, this resulted in commission of £660 for the school. We used this to enhance stock in our class libraries. Thank you!

ADMISSIONS FOR 2021-22

We are currently preparing our virtual open day, which will be placed on our website in due course. We have had a 3D scan of the school completed and this may be of particular interest to those considering Braidside for Nursery or P1 for Sept. 2021 but this will also be of interest to parents and guardians who have not had an opportunity to see the interior of the building. Together with some professional pictures, we hope this will give some sense of the school for parents. Admissions criteria for Nursery and P1 are available on the school website for parents' information. If any parent has a specific question or query, please do not hesitate to contact the school office.

As in the last few years, applications are made through the EA Citizen Portal, which will go live on 7th January 2021. Applications will close on 29th January 2021. For further information, parents may also visit the EA website www.eani.org.uk.

Thank you for your donations to the Rotary Christmas Hamper appeal. Donations were collected at the end of last week and during such difficult times, your generosity is much appreciated.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a safe, healthy and relaxing Christmas break. I hope the New Year brings good health, happiness and new hope for you and your families, after this very challenging time.

Yours faithfully,

J McAuley

Principal

<u>Dates for your Diary:</u>

Return to School: Tuesday 5 th January 2021
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