

 Ballydown Primary School & Nursery Unit

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 Principal: Mr B Murphy M.Ed. B.Ed. PQH(NI)

**Covid Review Plans**

Dear Parent,

The first three weeks of term have gone very smoothly. There has been a wonderful atmosphere in school and children have been very happy to be back into their classrooms, adapting so well to all of the new routines. Thanks to you all for also adapting well to new routines and ongoing changes.

We undertook a staff review of how the new routines are working and have carried out risk assessments of how best to move forward. There are a lot of regulations from DE and PHA, which need to be adhered to, in order to help minimise risks to our school community. We have taken these into consideration whilst weighing up what is in the best interests of our children’s learning and well-being.

**Homeworks**

Teachers have been busy assessing children since our return to school, in order to identify their levels and observing where there may be areas of difficulty or gaps in children’s learning, due to the extended absence from school. We feel that children have benefited from these first few weeks settling back into the ‘formal’ school setting and having the opportunity to revise and catch up on areas of learning.

We are planning on phasing a return to homeworks over the next few weeks.

**Reading- Week beginning 14th September**

Return to reading: In order to comply with DE guidance books will have to be ‘quarantined’ for 72 hours before sending home and on returning to school. The format of reading may be slightly different to what you are used to, but your child’s teacher will keep you informed.

P2-P3 will be getting some familiar, easy read books home to read. It is very important that lots of time is given to reading in these younger age groups. They have missed a lot of important teaching at this vital age of learning to read. We are confident that with lots of reading in school and support from home that these children will quickly catch up and grow in confidence. We cannot emphasise enough the importance of reading with and to your child every night at this stage.

P4-P7 will begin reading from this week. Older children in P6/7 classes will be studying novels which will be kept in school and reading online through Purple Mash. Some groups may have home reading. It is very important that these older, fluent readers are encouraged to keep up their own reading at home. Reading is the key to success in all areas of the curriculum.

**Spellings/Tables/Number Facts-Week beginning 21st September**

P3-P6 Spellings, tables and number facts until half term will be sent home in a pack. This will ensure that children will have access to learning should they be off ill or their family having to isolate. They will also be made available on our school website, under **Home Learning** in the homework folder for your child’s class [www.ballydownprimary.org.uk](http://www.ballydownprimary.org.uk). The code for the home learning area is **Ballydown2020**.

**Written Homeworks/Learning Activities – Week beginning 5th October**

P1-P3 will send activities for the week on Mondays to be returned each Friday to allow for quarantining time.

P4-P5 will send home homework on a Monday and Wednesday each week. Homeworks will also be uploaded to the home learning area of our website.

P6 We plan to use the school website for home works for now. There will be a folder for your child’s class in the home-learning area, into which teachers will upload 1 Literacy and 1 Numeracy for each week on a Monday and Wednesday. Children will have a homework book into which they will write answers.

P7 children will continue with their already established homework routine.

Your child’s class teacher will keep you informed of any specific requirements or changes to routines.

**School Bags**

We plan to allow children to bring schoolbags into and home from school from week beginning 5th October, unless guidance changes before then.

**Athletics**

We plan to start Friday athletics from Friday 25th September. Children will remain in their class bubbles to have an athletics session outdoors. To avoid changing in school children should come to school in athletics uniform (we are introducing a simple athletics uniform to keep things easy for you);

**Girls**- plain black leggings, red/white polo shirt, grey school jumper/cardigan, trainers and waterproof coat.

**Boys**- plain black track bottoms, red/white polo shirt, grey school jumper, trainers and waterproof coat.

**PE shoes/trainers**

Children are encouraged to keep a pair of PE plimsolls or trainers in school for PE and daily mile activities.

**Music Tuition**

We have carried out a risk assessment with our music tutors and have agreed on a protocol which we feel will allow this important aspect of children’s learning and development to continue. Tutors will be teaching behind a screen and children will only be taught in class bubbles. The area for teaching is in a separate room away from the main teaching classrooms and which will be sanitised between each lesson. Children will only be taking part in lessons if they have their own instrument and music book. More detailed guidance will be given to the children receiving lessons.

**Dinners**

The new dinner routine was very successful this week. Children were able to receive hot dinners whilst remaining in class bubbles. Thank you for sending money on **Mondays** in sealed, clearly labelled envelopes.

**Illness/sick notes**

To cut down on the opportunities for spread of infection we would advise on phoning the office or emailing if your child if off ill. Any child displaying Covid symptoms should not be sent to school i.e. a new continuous cough, a high temperature/fever or loss of taste/smell.

**Social Distancing**

Thank you for your committed effort to maintain social distancing in the school grounds, whilst dropping off and collecting children. It is very important that we all play our part in protecting each other. The wearing of face masks is encouraged.

Thank you all for your continued support and understanding as we navigate our way through how to make our school as best as it can be, as we all deal with these difficult circumstances. As we have said before, all of our guidance is subject to change at short notice if Government advice changes.

Take care

B. Murphy

Principal

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