14 January 2019,



Dear Parent/Guardian,

I’d like to wish everyone a Happy New Year and trust that everyone is well rested and ready to start afresh in 2019. Unfortunately, heating problems meant a disrupted start to our term, but we appreciate, as always, the understanding and support from all of our parents in such circumstances.

**KEEPING YOU INFORMED**

At Ballytrea, we do our utmost to plan ahead and to keep parents informed of what is happening. However, as was the case with our unexpected heating problems, we will face situations which are unforeseen or unexpected. We would therefore like to inform you of the procedures which we will take to inform you in such circumstances.

* We are currently setting up a texting service which will send a message to the **nominated** mobile telephone number of each parent/guardian.
* Updates will be made available as soon as possible on the **school website**.
* Details will be available on the EA website as soon as arrangements have been put in place.
* In the event of severe weather such as heavy snowfall, a decision on whether to close will, **if possible**, be made on the evening before or as early as possible on the morning in question. Health and Safety, transport, staffing and welfare considerations will be paramount in our decision making.

**WHAT CAN YOU DO?**

* With the possibility of new mobile phones being purchased over the Christmas period, we’d ask that you complete the nominated user contact form attached to this newsletter. This is the number which will be used by our **messaging service** to notify you, in the event that we need to contact you unexpectedly. Should other contact details have changed since September, please call in to the school office to update these.
* **Download the school app** onto your phone, so that any updates can be viewed. It is also the means by which we can send notifications to you directly, at given times, about current events or news. Currently, over fifty people have downloaded our school app and we would encourage you to promote this with childminders, grandparents and friends, as without the app on your phone, these notifications cannot be sent. Once the app is opened, you may also see some pop-up messages which are of current relevance.
* Always check that school is open before dropping your child off in the morning and stay with him/her until the doors open.

**RECEPTION/PRIMARY ONE ADMISSIONs**

Applications for places in 2019-2020 need to be made online. A support booklet was issued to new parents at our Open Day, but should any new parent require guidance, we are happy to guide you through the process, just call into the office Monday –Wednesday 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Information and the relevant links have been made available on our website under the Parents’ page in ‘Information and Forms.’

The EA are currently providing Admissions Clinics to support parents also and details of these can be found on our school website or the EA website. It is important to remember that the Admissions application process ends at midnight on Thursday 31 January. We look forward to having you join us here in Ballytrea and are happy to answer any questions that you may have. Just give us a call.

**YEAR 7 TRANSFER ARRANGEMENTS**

Preparations are underway for our Primary 7 pupils to transfer to Post-Primary education. We have had visits from local Post-Primary Principals or Vice-Principals and our pupils have had the opportunity to find out about the Curriculum and to ask questions which are of interest to them. Shortly, our Primary 7 pupils and their parents will be receiving their transfer forms for completion and return by early February and visits to prospective Post-Primary schools are on offer via Open Nights. Links to the admissions criteria for each School/College are available on our website. Any parent who needs help or advice in completing the form, should speak to Miss. Loudan.

**OPEN NIGHTS:**

* **Cookstown High School:** Thursday 17th January – time to be specified
* **Magherafelt High School:** Tuesday 15th January @ 7 p.m.
* **Rainey Endowed School:** Wednesday 16th and Thursday 17th January @ 7 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.
* **Sperrin Integrated College:** Wednesday 23rd January @ 7: p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

**ADVICE FOR PARENTS OF PRIMARY 6 PUPILS**

Many of our Year 6 parents will be starting to think about the transfer to Post-Primary Education, so an advice leaflet has been published to explain the main steps in the transfer process, the role of parents in the process and what to consider when making choices for children in Primary 7. This leaflet can be accessed via the **link on our website**. Our Year 6 pupils also availed of the Post-Primary Education talks in school and parents may wish to consider attending Open Nights also to begin thinking about the future.

**MUSIC AT BALLYTREA:**

We are delighted to have Miss. Caroline Jones coming in to school on a Wednesday afternoon this term, to support us in the development of our **choir**. This is a highly regarded tradition in Ballytrea and we look forward to the fabulous singing which will permeate throughout Ballytrea and to the enjoyment it will bring to the entire community at Ballytrea. String tuition continues every Monday afternoon and it is fantastic to see the progress of our pupils as they work towards their end of year concert. Tin whistle takes place every Tuesday and we extend a huge thankyou to Mr. Canavan on the success of the recent Mid-Ulster in Harmony event in Cookstown, at which our pupils participated. Friday sees tuition of the Pipes and Drums with Mr. Hassan and Mr. McGregor and we once again thank them for their work with our pupils.

**AFTERSCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

We are delighted this half-term to offer some well- known clubs catering for all ages.

Multi-Skills for Y5-Y7: Tuesdays 3 p.m. – 4p.m. Dates to be confirmed

Teddy Tennis for Y1-Y3: Thursdays 2 p.m. – 3 p.m.: 24th January, **none 31st January**, 7th February – 7th March

Senior Tennis for Y4-Y7: Thursdays 3 p.m. – 4 p.m. Dates as above

Additional clubs will be added in due course.

**PUNCTUALITY**

Arriving late for lessons can mean important information is missed and may need repeated. In a busy classroom, this can delay lessons and may hamper interaction with a lesson, especially if the pupil arrives significantly later than expected. Isolated occurrences are not an issue, but as we start a New Year, could I please ask for your support with what is essentially a vital aspect of the education of our children. Similarly, picking children up promptly at 2 p.m. or 3 p.m. has a knock-on effect with regard to our afternoon classes or after-school clubs. Your understanding and support, is as always, appreciated.

**REMINDER**

If you need to take your child to an appointment during school hours, a note must be sent to the class teacher, who must receive authorisation from the Principal. In the event of returning to school after a period of time, a dated note should also be sent with the reason for the absence.

**GOING DIGITAL**

Future copies of our Newsletter will be available online on our website on our Parents’ Area under ‘Newsletters,’ with paper copies being distributed only upon request. As our website becomes a prominent means of communication, we will be able to copy less, thus saving paper and using our funds in other valuable ways. Key dates and vital forms will however, continue to be sent in paper format for the foreseeable future.

**DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

* 8 January IFA coaching in school time for Y3-Y4 and Y5 -Y7
* 11 January Visit from Cookstown High School re: transfer for Y6-Y7
* 14 January Visit from Sperrin Integrated College re: transfer for Y6-Y7
* 15 January IFA coaching in school time for Y3-Y4 and Y5-Y7
* 15 January NO MULTI-SKILLS AFTER SCHOOL TODAY
* 21 January Bee Safe Home Accident Prevention Programme for Y5-Y7 9:30-

12:00 (Cookstown Leisure Centre)

* 22 January IFA coaching in school time for Y3-Y4 and Y5-Y7
* 24 January Teddy tennis and senior tennis begins (see Club note for details)
* 25 January Parkanur Shared education visit for Y5-Y7
* 29 January IFA coaching in school time for Y3-Y4 and Y5-Y7
* 1 February Non-uniform day (£1 donation)
* 4 February Parkanur Shared education visit for Y5-Y7
* 5 February Shared Education with St. Mary’s P.S. for Y1- Y2
* 5 February Multi-Skills Club resumes
* 12 February Shared Education with St. Mary’s P.S. for Y1- Y2
* 18 February HALF-TERM: SCHOOL CLOSED
* 19 February HALF-TERM: SCHOOL CLOSED
* 22 February Dairy Council Visit (Provisional arrangement)
* 26 February Inter-Schools’ Swimming Gala
* 26 February Shared Education with St. Mary’s P.S. for Y1- Y2
* 1 March Non-uniform day (£1 donation)
* 4 March Shared Education with St. Malachy’s for Y5- Y7
* 5 March Shared Education with St. Mary’s P.S. for Y1- Y2
* 14 March Junior Enterprise Club begins (details to follow)
* 18 March ST. PATRICK’S DAY: SCHOOL CLOSED
* 29 March Non-uniform day (£1 donation)
* 17 April SCHOOL CLOSES @ 12 NOON FOR EASTER
* 30 April STAFF DEVELOPMENT DAY: SCHOOL CLOSED TO PUPILS
* 1 May Term 3 begins

Yours faithfully,

V. Loudan (Acting Principal)



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**TEXT MESSAGING NOMINATED NUMBER FOR EMERGENCY NOTIFICATIONS**

Name of child 1: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Child 2: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name of child 3: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Other children: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Nominated Contact: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Mobile number of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Nominated contact:

***Please note that for messaging purposes, the nominated number must be a mobile number.***

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***Please return to the teacher of the eldest child only.***