



# Dromara Primary School



14th September 2021

## IMPORTANT UPDATES INCLUDED



### Thank you!

It was great to be able to welcome everyone back to school! This time last year we started back to school after a long period of lockdown and faced the uncertainty of what the autumn and winter would bring. There was a greater degree of optimism this year, but as things have turned out, these first couple of weeks back have proven to be, perhaps, even more challenging and uncertain. The numbers of children contracting COVID appear to be much higher than a year ago and with changes in guidance it has provided schools and parents with many problems.

However, I just want to say how proud I am of the Dromara parents and your support. Last year we had no issues with COVID cases directly in the school environment. This was partly due to the mitigations the school had put in place and a large degree of good fortune, but above all it was with the vigilance and support of our parents – THANK YOU!

This has continued this year and I am so thankful to those of you who have been cautious about sending children to school with any sickness, even if they were displaying symptoms not directly associated with COVID. To this end, I believe that we have been fortunate, so far, in that we have only had one COVID contact case in the school. That is not the case in most other schools that I know of and many have had multiple cases already this term and many hundreds of children have had their schooling severely disrupted already.

Thank you once again for your support and please continue to:

- **Be cautious and vigilant – don't send unwell children to school.**
- **Remind children of the need for good hand and oral hygiene.**
- **Please continue to wear face coverings at drop off/collection times.**

### School Office / Messages

As many of you may already know, Mrs Watson, our School Secretary took ill during the summer and remains in hospital for specialist care. It remains the case that she will not be back in school for the foreseeable future and I hope you will all think of her and her family at a very difficult time – we certainly miss her very much. We will attempt to keep lines of communication good with parents, but Mrs Watson was the one who sent notifications via the School App and Facebook, so these avenues may not be 'live' at the moment. However, we will use the website for information and also via email, so please check these regularly. You will see a letter from the Chief Medical Officer and an 'alert' letter from PHA on the homepage, please take a few minutes to read these. For non-urgent messages please email the school or send a note to your child's teacher and we will respond as soon as possible, as the telephone may not always be covered. We are pleased that Mrs Anne-Marie Camlin is able to work 3 days a week in the office to help us out.

### School Dinner and Free School Meals



If your child is eligible for Free School Meals and you have not yet applied, please apply via the EA website ([www.eani.org.uk](http://www.eani.org.uk)) as soon as possible. ***If you are eligible, please make sure you apply for Free School Meals even if you think you may not actually use them. The Education Authority takes this into account when calculating***

**the school budget, with a deadline of 8<sup>th</sup> October.** It also means that, should unexpected circumstances arise, your child can avail of a dinner any day throughout the year.

Remember: money should be sent in on a Monday morning for that week, or you can order on a Monday for a few weeks in advance. **Orders/money will only be accepted on Mondays.** Cheques should be payable to Education Authority for school meals.

### European Day of Languages

To celebrate this, we will have an **'Italian Day' on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> September.** Children should come to school wearing something associated with Italy or Italian colours. School Meals is going to provide pizza and pasta for school dinners that day, so if you would like your child to have pizza/pasta this must be ordered on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> September, so that they will have advance warning of numbers –thank you! Normal school dinner cost of £2.60 applies unless in receipt of free school meals.



### Nut Free Zone

We would remind parents that Dromara Primary is a 'nut free zone'. A number of our pupils have a severe nut allergy and we would ask that no products containing nuts are brought into school. Please refer to our health education policy on the website for more information on this.



### Healthy Eating

We strongly encourage children to make healthy choices and we need your support with this! Please try to send healthy snacks for break and lunch boxes. It is important for children to remain hydrated and we would ask that you send water instead of juice where possible. Please note that we do not allow any fizzy drinks or 'energy drinks' such as Powerade, Monster Red Bull etc. Thank you so much for your cooperation.



### School Uniform & Belongings

Could parents please check that all items of uniform, including PE kit and coats, and all belongings are clearly labelled. To give parents as much choice as possible, you can now order uniform directly from 2 suppliers, 'Signature Schools' online/shop ([www.signatureschools.co.uk](http://www.signatureschools.co.uk)), or 'School Trends' ([www.schooltrends.co.uk](http://www.schooltrends.co.uk)) online. Links are on our website. If you have any queries, please contact the school office.



### Sponsored Walk

As you know, we plan to hold our Sponsored Walk on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> October (or as soon thereafter if weather is unfavourable). It is disappointing that parents cannot attend this year, but we know the children are looking forward to some time out of the classroom! This is usually just one of our fundraising efforts during the year, but as other events may have to be cancelled, we would especially appreciate your support for our Sponsored Walk. Proceeds will be used for the benefit of all our pupils. Please return any sponsorship in an envelope by 15<sup>th</sup> October and thank you in advance.



### Parent Interviews

We hope that these will return to the normal face-to-face interviews this year, but we await guidance from the Department of Education. It is anticipated that they will be held **w/c Monday 18<sup>th</sup> October** with all pupils finishing at 1.55pm each day that week to facilitate the interviews.